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M. D. R. WILLINK, S.Th.

LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NEW YORK AND TORONTO: THE MACMILLAN CO.
1924

Made and Printed in Great Britain at
The Mayflower Press, Plymouth. William Brendon & Son, Ltd.

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INTRODUCTION

IT is now a good many years ago since, having to teach the Old Testament to some fairly advanced students, I was struck by the similarity between the descriptions of her experiences given by St. Theresa and some of the phenomena recorded by the prophets in connection with their reception of God's message. It seemed to me more profitable, in trying to form a theory of inspiration, to seek out facts as to how God had worked rather than to accept the statements of authorities, however much respected, as to how He ought to have worked, or how with our present-day outlook might be believed to have worked, in making His way known to men.

The following pages contain some of the examples collected, purposely chosen from sources varying both in date and religious outlook; and, while I am not so daring as to formulate a theory of inspiration of my own, it seems to me that it is only on a basis of some such comparison of actual occurrences that a satisfactory theory can be built up which will take into account the facts of spiritual experience.

Two fruitful sources have not been drawn upon here: James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, because I prefer as far as possible to see my illustrations in their

contexts; and the "To His Praise" column in the *Life of Faith*, because the contributions to that, being anonymous, do not easily admit of being verified.

Practically nothing has been said about the dates and authorship of the Old Testament documents, because these do not really come into the question. The only point at issue here is that certain men are said to have had certain experiences which are described in certain ways. Have we any reliable evidence of similar experiences more completely described by other writers from which we can check their statements?

The Prophetic Consciousness

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

THE problem before us can hardly be better set out than by quoting Jeremiah 28.

The scene is in one way modern enough. Two religious leaders confront each other at an open-air political meeting in the courts of the Temple. It is their phraseology, and the conception of politics on which it is based, that seem so foreign to our ideas.

It was a few years after the carrying away of the pick of the nation to Babylon, and one of the speakers, Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, wore on his neck a wooden yoke, signifying that the remainder of the people must submit to the yoke of the conqueror. The other—Hananiah, the son of Azzur—declared with a fine flourish: "Thus speaketh the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two full years will I bring again into this place . . ." all that had been carried away—king, spoil and prisoners. Jeremiah replied: "Amen; the LORD do so: the LORD perform thy words which thou hast prophesied. . . . The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to

pass, then shall the prophet be known that the LORD hath truly sent him."

For answer Hananiah took the yoke from Jeremiah's neck and broke it, repeating his prediction. Jeremiah went away in silence.

"Then the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah . . . saying, 'Go, and tell Hananiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD: Thou hast broken the bars of wood; but thou shalt make in their stead bars of iron.'" Jeremiah returned with his message, adding "Hear now, Hananiah; the LORD hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. Therefore thus saith the LORD, 'Behold I will send thee away from off the face of the earth; this year thou shalt die, because thou hast spoken rebellion against the LORD.' So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month."

It all sounds extraordinarily unlike a present-day scene, and yet, stripped of its old-world dress, it is extraordinarily modern.

There is the great open-air meeting addressed by two religious leaders, one of whom declares the state of society too hopelessly rotten for God to deliver it from its rightful punishment; the other, with what doubtless appeared to his audience—who were no more dissatisfied with themselves than most people are—to be splendid and patriotic faith, declared that they had only to believe and God would work a great deliverance.

What is foreign to our ideas is that both men claimed to have received their political message from God Himself. Both introduce their speeches with "Thus saith the LORD," and the audience accept it as the natural claim of the man they call a "prophet." Again

in chapter 36, 16, Jeremiah has been publishing a series of his addresses, by the only method then open to him, that of having them publicly read, and it is thought a political event of sufficient importance to be brought in all seriousness to the king.

The prophet was held to have as definite a right to speak with authority on political or social questions as a Minister of State, and throughout the history of the nation, as long as it had any policy to direct, we find prophets speaking not only as reformers, but as the representatives of a Great Power with the ability to enforce its commands in a small dependency.

Nowadays we are accustomed to hear men appeal to "Christian principles" in matters of policy, but these men claimed to have direct revelations from God on the special points at issue. The assumption is that "The LORD your God is your King," and at every crisis He sends a messenger with His directions to His viceroy.

We are told that at first the nation was ruled by prophets under direct Divine guidance like Moses or Samuel. Samuel acts as king-maker, and still expects to guide the policy of the king. Saul is dethroned for asserting his independence. Later we find David has at court a series of "seers," Abiathar, Gad, Nathan, two of whom tell him very unpalatable home-truths. Later, again, Ahijah announces the division of the kingdom, and appoints the new king.[1] Shemaiah forbids the resulting war.[2] The "disobedient prophet" beards Jeroboam at the altar of his new sanctuary.[3] Elijah does the like to Ahab, not once nor twice. Elisha changes the succession.[4] The prophets freely advise or criticise.[5] In later years their freedom of speech was liable to be

[1] 1 Kings 11, 29–30.
[2] 1 Kings 12, 22–24.
[3] 1 Kings 13.
[4] 2 Kings 9.
[5] 1 Kings 20, *passim*; 21, 1–7; 2 Kings 22, 14–20.

resented,[1] but it made no difference. They looked upon themselves as watchmen with a responsibility to God and man.

These men claimed not only to speak God's views upon the immediate political questions of their own nation, in which we see that the event generally proved them right, but on moral and social matters too, and though they spoke to a small semi-barbarous people, we are only now beginning to realise how true their teaching was on what does or does not make for national health. And these pronouncements were not made in the safe pages of a book, but the prophet confronted the high-placed evil-doer in person with his "Thus saith the LORD."

On the same authority they claimed to foretell the line of God's purpose not only for the individual before them[2] but for the world. In Isaiah[3] the prophet in the name of his God throws down the gauntlet to the gods of the nations, challenging them to foretell the future which He has planned and will bring to pass.

We find in fact from Genesis to Revelation the assumption that there is a chain of men to whom God has directly made known His will. There are often conflicting claims to be His mouth-piece—of which more later—but the writings which have come to us making that claim do contain what is recognised as some of the highest moral and spiritual teaching we possess, that on which our present-day morality is based. These writings are recognised by the Church as "inspired." But the manner of the inspiration is a matter very much in dispute. How was the message received,

[1] 1 Kings 22, 26–28; Jeremiah, *passim*.
[2] 1 Kings 16, 1–10. [3] Isaiah 40, 22–27; 46, 9–13.

and what authority had the prophet for believing that he received it direct from God ?

It is the object of this essay to bring forward certain evidence which may illustrate the question.

There have been a good many different ways of looking at the question of inspiration. Not so very long ago, it was generally believed that the prophet was "a man in the Bible," and therefore quite unlike any man anywhere else, and Biblical inspiration was little more than writing at the dictation of the Holy Spirit what a man himself might or might not understand. This was in fact a continuation of the Montanist saying, "I am the lyre and the Spirit is the plectrum." That position is not yet wholly abandoned.

Then a reaction set in, and it was said that the prophet was a fairly ordinary man of great spiritual insight and poetical power which he used with sanctified common sense, but he never literally heard the voice of God. It was only his way of expressing himself. People do not hear in that way.

Next came the Spiritualists, making claim to powers of communication with the spiritual world, but these powers are for the most part exercised unconsciously by the medium in trance, or by automatic writings, and have been so exercised for thousands of years; many of their writings, too, are of a highly didactic—though not always very original—character. They claim that man *can* hear supernatural voices.

But beside the Spiritualists arose the Psychologists, and to every claim made by seer or medium they opposed the mysterious words "suggestion" or "subconsciousness."

These words open up very large questions, but for the

present purpose it is enough to notice three main points. The theory of suggestion teaches that :—

(i) In certain circumstances I can make myself believe what I like.

(ii) In certain circumstances I can make you believe what I like, either by direct action or by telepathy, my thoughts filtering into your mind without either of us knowing it.

(iii) If enough of us believe something ; if "everybody does it" or "they say so," we suggest ideas to each other and make each other believe them, and it is sometimes very hard to recognise that there is no real authority for the thing said or done.

"That," says the objector, "is what happens to your medium *or* to your prophet. It is considered to be the right thing for him to hear or see in a certain way ; he expects it, other people expect it, so he does hear and see things, but they are all bred in his own brain."

Now that sort of reasoning would quite account for Hananiah. He had in the great historical deliverance under Isaiah a certain ground for his teaching. He very much wanted it to be true ; so did his audience. It was exactly their idea of what a God *ought* to do for His people, and Hananiah may honestly have persuaded himself that God had told him He would so do.

But does it account for Jeremiah ? He did not want to speak, nor others to hear, his message. Or does it account for all the other facts ? for there are other facts to be taken into consideration which will be brought forward in due course. All mills may work on much the same principle, but the corn they grind comes from very various places.

As to the subconsciousness, or unconscious mind being the source of prophetic messages, while Hudson in his *Psychic Phenomena* some years ago was prepared to allow that the "subjective mind" was more idealistic than the objective, the present-day schools seem to teach that it is considerably less so—that it is in fact a hiding-place for what we do not want to have in our conscious minds. Professor Pratt speaks of dissociated personalities, suggesting that the "presence of a dissociated complex is sufficient to explain a vision," or again, he refers it to the "subconscious mechanism." "The prophet ponders long over the condition of his people, the will of God, and the problem of his own duty. Then some day suddenly the sought-for solution rushes into his mind—he finds a message ready-made upon his tongue, and it is almost inevitable that he should preface it with the words: 'Thus hath Yahweh showed me'!"[1]

But as Prof. Pratt elsewhere points out,[2] our being able to describe a mental process does not prove that the matter with which it is concerned is not real. "May it then perhaps be that the mystics are the seers of our world, and that whenever they open the eyes of their souls, the Eternal Light pours in." I may analyse the mental processes by which I choose a particular tram, but my catching a perfectly real tram is a fact. Have we grounds for saying that prophets and apostles had as good evidence for their statements as I have for saying "That is a tram which will take me to the Embankment"? St. Paul makes the claim perfectly clearly: "The gospel which is preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."[3]

[1] Rel. Con., p. 65. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 458. [3] Gal. 1, 11–12.

And he distinguishes clearly between revelation and conclusions arrived at by ordinary processes of thought. "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment."[1]

As Christians we are committed to a belief in a spiritual world, a higher state of being in which live God, angels, and departed spirits, but of whose nature we know very little. But we may believe that God did not leave Himself without means of making His will known to His creatures, and if we are in future to live under those conditions it is not impossible that we may already have in embryo some powers belonging to the state for which we are destined, and with which some of us at least may be able to apprehend communications from it.

But how?

Opinions differ very much. Canon Barnes, speaking on Spiritualism, says that even if there is an influence of the departed "it is almost certainly a diffused atmosphere such as that with which the Holy Spirit surrounds us when we try to know, serve and love God. We may expect to experience it in its power to guide will and feeling rather than to convey specific ideas."[2]

Dr. Skinner considers that communications were much more definite. Writing on Numbers 12, 6–8, he says: "We may reasonably hold that in face to face converse with Yahwe, that comprehensive insight into His purpose which are there attributed to Moses, we have the typical representation of what Jeremiah regarded as the essence of true prophecy."[3]

Leaving theory, let us come to facts. The series of people from Genesis to Revelation who claimed to have

[1] 1 Cor. 7, 25.
[2] Spiritualism and the Christian Faith, p. 35.
[3] P. and R., p. 197. See also pp. 221, 222.

immediate intercourse with God did not cease with the close of the New Testament canon. It has continued until the present day, and by some of them details have been given of the manner in which they received communications and how they judged of their truth, which coincide with the scanty data given by the prophets, who were generally more interested in the matter than the manner of their messages. It is the intention of the following pages to bring forward a little of the evidence from these sources in the hope that it may throw light on the vexed question of prophetic inspiration.

CHAPTER II

SOME SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

IN Deuteronomy two rough tests are given by which to judge whether a man claiming to be a prophet is really speaking from the Lord or not. (1) The teaching must be continuous with what has gone before; it must not contradict God's previous revelations of Himself.[1] (2) It must be verified, either by a sign or by its actual working out.[2] The same principles are accepted in the New Testament; the first by our Lord in His controversy with the Pharisees, when He claimed that His teaching was continuous with the Law, while theirs nullified it,[3] and the second by His use of signs, not only in the case of the sick of the palsy[4] but elsewhere.[5]

The complementary side of the test is to be found in the fate of the sons of Sceva.[6] The Name of God will not allow itself to be used in vain.[7]

If we adopt these tests we at once rule out from our inquiry a number of utterances coming from séances and automatic writing. But we leave in a number of orthodox and edifying reflections which have "come into" people's minds, and which are in accordance with actual events because they are probably an up-

[1] Deut. 13, 1–3.
[2] Deut. 18, 20–22.
[3] Mark 7, 1–13; cp. 1 John 4, 2–3.
[4] Mark 2, 9–12.
[5] Cp. John 3, 2; 5, 36.
[6] Acts 19, 13–16.
[7] Cp. Mark 9, 38–39.

rising in the conscious mind of principles learnt from the study of books which have been inspired in the Biblical sense. These must also be excluded. They are not "prophetic," merely reminiscent.

But from the first days of the Church to our own time there have been men and women who have claimed to hear the word of God, and who give the criteria by which they have learnt to distinguish a genuine revelation from a merely imaginary one, and from them our illustrations will for the most part be taken. Some of them are pre-Reformation mystics, and in one way their evidence is more valuable in confirmation of the prophetic hints than that of members of the Reformed Churches, because sometimes, as in the case of St. Theresa, their acquaintance with the Old Testament was too slight for them to colour their accounts with reminiscences of Old Testament phraseology as did Fox and Hudson Taylor, who are soaked in it.

It is noticeable, too, that many of the great mystics do not look upon such phenomena of revelation as at all a necessary sign of, or accompaniment to, a high degree of spirituality. "There are many saints who do not know what it is to receive one such favour, while others who receive them are not saints at all," says St. Theresa,[1] and both she and the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* say that if people are bent on having such "favours" the devil is perfectly ready to supply them to those who do not know how to distinguish between the false and the true. "All other comforts, sounds, and gladness and sweetness, that come from without suddenly and thou wottest never whence, I pray thee have them in suspect. For

[1] Int. Cas., VI, ix, 19.

they may be both good and evil; wrought by a good angel if they be good, and by an evil angel if they be evil,"[1] and "the devil hath power to feign some false light or sounds, sweet smells in their noses," etc., if they are bent on having them, and at the same time "The remembrance of God will he not put from them, for fear that he should be had in suspect, and him list not to let himself,"[2] and so he gradually works them into error.

As a protection against this deception the mystics tell of an experience which is different in kind.

Fox, speaking of a discussion at Swarthmore in 1652 with some "priests," says he asked them "whether any one of them could say he ever had the word of the Lord to go and speak to such and such a people? None of them durst say he had, but one of them burst out into a passion, and said he could speak his experience as well as I. I told him experience was one thing, but to receive and go with a message, and to have a word from the Lord as the apostles and prophets had and did, this was another thing. And therefore I put it to them again, could any of them say he had ever had a command or word immediately from the Lord at any time? but none of them could say so."[3]

St. Theresa speaks to the same effect of both vision and audition. "One who very lovingly asks something of our Lord may fancy that an answer comes from Him. This often occurs, but I think that no one accustomed to receive divine communications could be deceived on this point by the imagination,"[4] and some people with vivid imaginations "feel certain they see whatever their fancy imagines. If they had ever

[1] Cloud, p. 225.
[2] Cloud, p. 238.
[3] Fox, p. 90.
[4] Int. Cas., VI, iii, 17.

beheld a genuine vision they would recognise the deception unmistakably."[1] In fact there is very little which later writers can say about auto-suggestion in this matter which St. Theresa has not taken into account in her books. But both she and some of our modern teachers say there is a genuine experience. "There is generally something proper to itself and belonging to no other in the tone of a human voice," says Fr. Holmes.[2] "It can rarely be described, and no one can explain with scientific accuracy why he knows that it is that voice and no other that he has heard. Experience testifies that it is the same with the voice of the Divine Friend; it is His and none other's; they know His voice."

Sundar Singh confirms what the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* says about false ecstasy: "No longer now, but frequently some years ago, before getting into the state of ecstasy, I used to hear voices and that with these ears (that is, not in the spiritual language of the heavenly world), and see lights or hear music, and I found out that this was due to Satan or some evil spirit. . . . I think there is something in the heart which enables one to judge instinctively whether such experiences are from God or not. I somehow felt that these were not from God. As soon as I heard the voice I recognised that it was not Christ's voice. The sheep hear His voice and recognise it. Mary thought that the man she saw in the garden was the gardener, but as soon as He began to speak she knew that it was Christ."[3]

The authors of "The Sadhu," in speaking of this claim, say that Sundar Singh does believe himself to

[1] Int. Cas., VI, ix, 6.
[2] Presence of God, p. 89.
[3] Sadhu, p. 150.

have spiritual experiences analogous to those of the writer of the Apocalypse. "If so it follows that a study of the Sadhu's experience will throw light on the psychological mechanism through and by means of which religious truth was mediated to certain of the Biblical writers."[1] "His visions are those of a personality completely unified . . . in deep conscious communion with his Lord . . . the same psychological principles have determined the form, and exactly the same factors of personal conduct, character, and concentrated devotion account for the value . . . of the visions in the Bible. We should connect this with the conception of Inspiration as being essentially a hyper-stimulation of the natural faculties of insight and understanding which, in men of high ideals schooled by the discipline of a noble life, must inevitably follow from personal communion with a personal Divine. And lastly, we should urge that the supreme degree of Inspiration which characterises the great Hebrew writers is mainly conditioned by their standard of conduct—sane, stern, but, for that age, humane—by their intense concentration of interest on moral and religious issues, and by their deep experience of communion with the Divine."[2] All these last points will be seen to be borne out by the evidence of the prophets themselves.

In trying to account for the phenomena of inspiration much use has been made of the phenomena of clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, thought transference, suggestion, the work of the unconscious mind and so on, and we may have cause to believe that some of the accounts of the signs done by the prophets were due to one or other of these powers. Part of the

[1] "Sadhu," p. 114. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

words of Samuel[1] might be ascribed to powers of clairvoyance ; so might Ahijah's recognition of the wife of Jeroboam ;[2] Elisha was almost certainly both clairvoyant and clairaudient.[3] It may well be, too, that many of our Lord's signs of healing were wrought by the power of suggestion. But does this idea of the Divine economy lessen the authority of the sign of the prophet ? We have no right to debar God from the right to work by one of His own laws because we have found out that we are more wonderfully made than we had thought. After all, God set in order the laws of psychology which we are just discovering, and has been working through them all down the ages. We are like the Bourgeois Gentilhomme when he discovered that he had been speaking prose "all my life without knowing it." It is more than likely that a man was called to be a prophet because the possession of such gifts was a special qualification for the office. Just as some of us have an extra range of musical sensitiveness or artistic power, so it is in spiritual things. While many of us have occasional spiritual experiences which are above the ordinary level of our everyday life, some people have, as it were, an extra range of sight and hearing. Their eyes and ears are, as Elisha said, "open."[4] It all depends on the use they make of their power what kind of things they will see, whether they will see truth or falsehood.

If then, without going into details of the exact mode, we accept it as a working hypothesis that there are some people who can both hear and see things which others cannot, and yet which are proved by

[1] 1 Sam. 9, 15 to 10, 9. [2] 1 Kings 14, 6.
[3] 2 Kings 5, 26 ; 6, 12. 32. [4] 2 Kings 6, 17.

the event to give them true information, we find that they are divided into two groups :—

1. Those who without being especially spiritual may hear or see once or twice. These are not prophets as a rule. The message is often individual, and no particular conditions are required, except that there is a need for that person to know or do something, and there is no other means of making it known to him. For instance, during the war many people heard stories of men who had been saved from death by hearing their names called and being thus led out of the range of some shell ; others have received intimations of deaths, or special guidance in emergencies. The experience is generally a private one.

2. There are also those who hear frequently. In Old Testament times the prophet held that he was responsible to the nation for his power of vision. He was a watchman, and they had a right to expect of him that he would "stand on his tower," and pass on to them any warning or command that he received from the Lord.[1] His message is one of more than personal importance ; he sees for the sake of his people. Therefore he must, as it were, go into training, and we find that the prophets denounce certain things as hindering, or even shutting off vision. The condition of such prophecy was, as Dr. Skinner says, "the illumination of the whole conscious mind by the spirit of God."[2] Any kind of self-interest and self-indulgence obscured the vision. The man who divined for hire and made his living by "spaeing" could not expect revelations from the Lord.[3] Drink shuts the eyes.[4] The man who consistently speaks the smooth,

[1] Ezek. 3, 17 ; 33, 2–9 ; Hab. 2, 1 ; Isa. 21, 6–12.
[2] P. and R., p. 222. [3] Micah 3, 5–8 ; Jer. 8, 10.
[4] Isa. 28, 7, whence succeeds Isa. 29, 9–11.

popular thing when he should take the message of reproof, especially when he combines it with a sharing in the sins he ought to have reproved,[1] can have no revelation,[2] or again, as St. Paul says,[3] the "natural man" does not naturally see spiritual things. The popularity hunter could not be a true watchman.[4]

So the prophet had to be a man of disciplined life as well as spiritual fervour, and this agrees with what we find in the lives of later men and women who have claimed to receive direct guidance from God. Apostles, mediæval mystics, early Quakers, Bunyan, Grellet, China Inland Missionaries and others who will be quoted were all men and women living with a single eye to the glory of God and freely enduring hardness in obedience to it.

One thing is to be noted. People did not undertake this life with a view to receiving visions and revelations. As has been said above, many of them looked upon such things as "favours" not to be expected or desired, though they might be gratefully received. St. Theresa says that a person who very strongly desires such gifts is "certain to be deceived, or at least is in great danger of delusion" either from the devil or from auto-suggestion. The vision is the outcome of a life lived in relation with God. The life comes first, the visions and auditions may or may not follow. Brainerd had none, nor had Thérèse of Lisieux.

It is noteworthy that what to them was, and has ever since been held to be, a special favour from God, was to the prophets a duty, and not always a welcome one. Herein is the safeguard of the claim of the prophets to originality, which some may think endangered by

[1] Jer. 14, 13–16.
[2] Jer. 23, 9–40; Ezek. 13, 1–23; Lam. 4, 13–14.
[3] 1 Cor. 2, 14.
[4] Lam. 2, 14.

saying that others have held direct communion with God after a similar fashion. Does it lessen the originality of Newton that others have carried on his discovery of gravitation, or of Lister that now all surgeons use antiseptics? Only one man could *discover* that the earth goes round the sun, or be first at the North Pole. The prophets were the pioneers of new truth. Men have learnt from God since, and the standard by which they have tested the teaching has been its correspondence with that already given to the prophets. Christ Himself declared that the proof of the validity of His teaching was its continuity with what had been revealed before, whereas the "tradition" of the Pharisees was a perversion of their own.[1]

Not only so, but the Bible is still God's instrument in these further revelations. It is notable how many of the auditions recorded by other servants of God are in the words already used and recorded by these prophetic pioneers. As Fr. Holmes says, "It is not to be used only as a record of what He has said in the past; it is the instrument through which He speaks with a living Voice to-day. . . . It is attested by the experience of millions that the Supreme Personality uses this book to speak with living tones to the sons of men."[2] Here is an instance. During the Boxer rebellion a China Inland Missionary and his family underwent a terrible time of hunting and persecution, recorded in *A Thousand Miles of Miracle in China*. Their minds were well stored with the words of the Bible, and the whole account is full of the ways in which these were used not only for comfort but for actual direction in cases of emergency. "Through the written word laid up in our hearts, the Eternal

[1] Mark 7, 9 etc. [2] Pres., p. 23.

Word manifested to us both Himself and the Father. . . It was literally as though I heard His living voice beside me. Now He was breathing in my ear 'Fear not them which kill the body' . . . " and so on.[1] The same use is seen throughout Bunyan's experience in *Grace Abounding*, and also in Amy Wilson Carmichael's *Nor Scrip*.

It is sometimes objected that the prophets expected to hear, and heard what they expected. That is of course part of Jeremiah's indictment of the false prophets,[2] and St. Theresa gives it as one of the reasons for not seeking to have such favours. But, on the other hand, no one blames botanists or astronomers for finding some object just because they looked carefully for it, and why should the spiritual discoverer's finding be more suspect than theirs? Sometimes, too, the vision or call came when it was not expected. To Amos,[3] Paul,[4] Isaiah,[5] the word came suddenly, and sometimes, as St. Theresa says: "A person who is in no way expecting such a favour, nor has ever imagined herself worthy of receiving it, is conscious that Jesus Christ stands by her side."[6]

It appears then that as the same two instruments are at work—the Spirit of God and the mind of man—we may hope to find in the records of later communications something that may throw light on the method by which the revelations recorded in the Bible were received, and some explanation of the expressions used by the recipients.

[1] 1000 Miles, p. 134.
[2] Jer. 14, 13–15; 23, 16. Ezek. 13, 3.
[3] Amos 7, 15.
[4] Acts 9, 1–9.
[5] 2 Kings 20, 1–5.
[6] Int. Cas., VI, viii, 2.

CHAPTER III

THE FRINGE OF PROPHECY

(*a*) Ecstatic Actions

BEFORE going on to deal with the phenomena of the revelations to the greater prophets it will be well to consider some of what might be called the fringes of prophecy, the prophetic gilds and occasional manifestations.

These gilds, with their exciting "prophesyings" as recorded in I Samuel, have been declared to be very like, and possibly not much more spiritual than, the proceedings of dervishes in much the same neighbourhoods. But a closer examination will show resemblances to incidents much nearer home. There was, it is generally admitted, some kind of a revival under Samuel, and—to go no further for convenience of reference—very marked similarities to much of what is recorded can be found in Appendix I to the *Archbishops' Report on the Evangelistic Work of the Church* in which accounts are given of the phenomena accompanying revivals from the times of the Franciscans.

The chief passages in question are I Samuel 10, 5–13; 19, 20–24.

The chief items seem to be the use of music and the infectious character of the singing, so that a man

like Saul, who afterwards showed himself to be of an unstable mental balance, was twice carried away by it.

Anyone who has at all followed the course of twentieth-century revival campaigns will remember how large a part singing has taken in them, and the extraordinary effect it has on many temperaments. The work of Alexander the choirmaster was as effective as that of Torrey or Chapman. Moody and Sankey are inseparably connected, while all revival meetings of a certain type, missions, and the meetings of the Keswick Convention seem to be inevitably and of set purpose preceded by prolonged singing of a particular kind of "mission" hymn, one feature of which is that it nearly always has either a very marked staccato rhythm (an irreverent person not affected by music said that in writing a Keswick tune the first thing seemed to be to put a dotted note about the middle of every line and write the rest of the tune round it) or a swinging waltz time. What is that but the rhythm of the harp and timbrel of the early sons of the prophets? And now, as then, it has strong effects on those who are set to that key by nature. The Franciscan revival went ahead to the hymns of God's "jongeleurs"; Wesley's revival was the cause of an outbreak of hymnody; Moody and Sankey sang thousands into conversion; the Welsh revival services consisted almost entirely of singing and prayers. As Prof. Pratt says: "By singing out at the top of his voice the sentiments and ideas which the revivalist desires to instil into him, each member of the audience suggests them to himself in the technical meaning of that phrase."[1] And he says it is a perfectly sound and legitimate psychological method.

[1] Rel. Con., pp. 176–7.

Then follows the instance of Elisha in the wilderness of Edom, calling for a musician before he could tell the three kings what course to pursue.[1] This is sometimes taken to prove that the prophet wished to be thrown into a kind of hypnotic trance before he could produce an oracle. The actual case seems to be much more commonplace. We do not know how Elisha came to be there with the army, but he seems to have been in a very bad temper with Joram, which suggests that under the then conditions of universal military service he had been called up against his will for an expedition of which he disapproved. Be that as it may, he was distinctly ruffled, and the aim of the minstrel was probably to quiet his nerves and temper till he was sufficiently calm to hear spiritual communications.

Another feature of the early prophesyings in Samuel was the way in which people were impelled to fall on their faces before the meeting. This has its parallel in several modern instances. Speaking of the Irish revival of 1857–9, the Archbishops' report quotes: "a great number in this neighbourhood . . . are 'smitten down' suddenly, and fall as nerveless and paralysed and powerless as if killed instantly by a gunshot; they fall with a deep groan."[2] In the account of the "Master and the Man," usually taken as the story of Tauler's conversion, much the same thing is described as happening at his second sermon after his conversion.[3] Finney gives several instances quite as striking,[4] and similar things happened under Wesley's early preaching till he put a stop to it.[5] R. H. Thouless quotes this of the Kentucky revival of 1801.

"The whole body of persons who actually fell help-

[1] 2 Kings 3, 15.
[2] p. 51.
[3] Tauler, pp. 93–94.
[4] Finney, pp. 84–95, 126, 135, etc.
[5] Curteis, pp. 372–5.

less to the earth during the progress of the meeting was computed to be . . . 3000 persons, about 1 in 6. . . . At no time was the floor less than half covered. Some lay quiet, unable to speak or move. Some talked but could not move. Some beat the floor with their heels. Some, shrieking in agony, bounded about like a live fish out of water. Many lay down and rolled over and over for hours at a time."[1]

So these early manifestations seem to have been only the quite natural and spontaneous accompaniments of revival in many other places—the coming of a new spiritual force into contact with a mental mechanism not accustomed to it, and unable to adapt itself at first to new conditions. Later in Israel they seem to have become more systematised, as regular "methods," and closely assimilated to those of the heathen outside. There is not a very great deal to choose between the performances of the prophets of Baal on Carmel,[2] and of the so-called prophets of the Lord in the gate at Samaria,[3] and from the time of Amos to that of Ezekiel we find the greater prophets continually confronted with a succession of men whom they denounced as prophesying falsehoods. It was then, of course, a temptation for a shrewd fellow with some psychic powers and the capacity for working himself up into the requisite frenzy to set up as a prophet, just as now he might set up as a "psychic" to get a living. They were not necessarily all deliberate frauds; like Mr Sludge they may have felt that there was more in it than they knew.

These pseudo-prophets and prophetesses apparently held what we should call regular séances.[4] Jeremiah

[1] Davenport, *Prim. Traits in R.R.* Thouless, p. 155.
[2] 1 Kings 18, 26–9. [3] 1 Kings 22, 6–12.
[4] Isa. 8, 19; Ezek. 13, 17.

says they went about trying to steal from each other any hint of what might be a genuine revelation or dream,[1] and the oracles or " burdens " they produced were strikingly in accordance with what they and their clients thought ought to be God's course of action, as St. Theresa says " when people strongly desire a thing, the imagination makes them fancy they see or hear it, just as when a man's mind is set on a thing all day he dreams of it at night."[2] If the man cannot raise a dream himself, both she and the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* say the devil is quite ready to supply what is wanted. We do not generally admit his working nowadays in such unqualified fashion, but if man's mind is open to suggestion from incarnate intelligences, why not also from discarnate, and that of two kinds, good and bad ? Spiritualistic evidence gives at least an air of probability to the work of some such agencies.

One of the most interesting of these men on the fringe of prophecy is Balaam. He appears to have been what Hudson would call a trance speaker, with possibly some real knowledge of the One God in him. He came from Pethor in the borders of the kingdom of the Mitanni, from whence came the queens of Amenhoteps I and II who are suspected of bringing in their train some of the monotheistic ideas which were more fully developed by Akhnaton. It was also not very far from Haran, the traditional starting-place of Abraham, and dwelling-place of Laban, hence there may have been some tradition of the God worshipped by them. For if a curse was to be really effectual it was necessary to be able to use the name of the God under whose protection the person to be cursed lay, and it may well have been

[1] Jer. 23, 30. [2] Int. Cas., VI, ix, 15.

that all the trouble of calling Balaam from a distance instead of employing local talent was undertaken because he was supposed to know the name of Israel's God.

Balaam is careful to safeguard himself by disclaiming any personal responsibility for what he says.[1] When it comes to the point he goes "to meet with enchantments."[2] Evelyn Underhill says[3] that the object of the incantation used by a magician is not that it shall have an effect on the spirits invoked, but that it shall act as a kind of transmuting agent on the magician himself, whereby his mind is set free from things of the earth plane to operate on the psychic plane. Whatever he expected, Balaam describes himself as "falling down," possibly in a trance, and the translators do not seem to be sure whether his eyes are opened to spiritual things or shut to earthly. In any case we are told that his power of trance speaking was for once not amenable to the suggestions of those about him, and he delivered an oracle very far from what was desired, apparently without his own volition.

This is in marked contrast to the accounts given by the Hebrew prophets from Moses onward. In every case they are represented as understanding what they are saying. They ask questions and are given at all events some explanation of the reason for what they are to say. St. Paul in later days writes: "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets,"[4] in direct contrast to the prevailing Gentile idea, afterwards developed by the Montanists, and now held by some Pentecostal groups, that the more really inspired a man was the less control he had over himself.

This idea of control and understanding comes out in

[1] Num. 22, 18. 38.
[2] Num. 24, 1.
[3] Mysticism, p. 189.
[4] 1 Cor. 14, 32.

the contrast between the controlled bearing and considered utterance of the greater prophets whenever we find them set in controversy with their opponents.

St. Theresa has interesting remarks on both these points.

She strongly counsels anyone who thinks he is being given revelations not to attend to them. This is quite possible if they are self-suggested, but "This is not feasible when these communications come from the Holy Ghost; who when He speaks, stops all other thoughts and compels the mind to listen . . . the soul can do nothing, nor has it ears to stop, nor power to think of aught but what is said to it."[1] This is the exact opposite to the counsel given by the Tongues Movement. But the prophet must understand as well as hear. Some things revealed she says cannot be understood "in a way that can be told, but they do make a deep impression." "Neither was Moses able to relate more than God willed of what he had seen in the burning bush, but unless the Almighty had clearly revealed certain mysteries to his soul, causing it to see and know its God was present, the lawgiver could never have undertaken so many and such great labours."[2]

[1] Int. Cas., VI, iii, 27. [2] *Ibid.*, iv, 5–7.

CHAPTER IV

FRINGE OF REVELATION

(*b*) Exterior Visions and Auditions

THE prophets themselves give but few details as to the manner in which they received their communications, but by comparing what few data they do give with those given by later persons it is possible to arrive at some idea of how they heard and saw spiritual things.

Julian of Norwich in the fourteenth century writes of her *Revelations of Divine Love*[1]: "All the blessed teaching of our Lord was shewed by three parts: that is to say, by bodily sight, and by word formed in mine understanding, and by spiritual sight. For the bodily sight I have said as I saw as truly as I can; and for the words I have said them right as our Lord shewed them to me; and of the spiritual sight, I have told some deal, but I may never fully tell it," or, as she says in another place, "the spiritual sight I may not and cannot shew it unto you as openly and as fully as I would."

St. Theresa gives the same evidence. God arouses the soul "by means of words addressed to the soul in many different ways; sometimes they appear to come from without, at other times from the inner depths of

[1] Chapter 73.

the soul, or again from its superior part, while other speeches are so exterior as to be heard by the ears like a real voice. At times, indeed, very often this may be only a fancy, especially with persons of a lively imagination or who are afflicted with melancholy to any marked extent."[1] To these latter she says no attention should be paid—they should be told not to trouble themselves about it, for "any kind I mentioned may come either from God, the devil, or the imagination," and she goes on to describe the means of distinguishing the source from which they come.

Prof. Pratt has no place for the devil in his account of these "abnormalities." He uses the subconscious self and dissociated personality to account for them to some extent. "The phenomena which I have here in mind are such things as violent but unaccountable impulses to do certain things, fixed ideas whose source cannot be traced, 'inspirational speaking,' so far as this is not to be accounted for by the ordinary laws of association, motor automatisms, visions and the like. These all bring with them the sense of external origination. . . . Moreover, all the phenomena above referred to have parallels in non-religious cases, where the explanation is plainly to be had in terms of dissociation of consciousness. . . . The 'inspiration' of the prophet, like that of the poet or of the inventor, often seems to have its immediate source in the deeper and unconscious parts of his being." The prophet ponders over the state of his people. "Then some day suddenly the sought-for solution rushes into his mind—he finds a message ready-made upon his tongue, and it is almost inevitable that he should preface it with the words: 'Thus hath Yahweh showed me'!"[2]

[1] Int. Cas., VI, iii, 1–4. [2] Rel. Con., pp. 64, 65.

This would doubtless account for many of what St. Theresa would call "imaginary" revelations which, as she says, may be quite edifying in themselves, but does not account for the *new* matter which is the distinguishing note of the true prophet. Prof. Pratt ascribes much of the "inspiration" of which we are accustomed to speak to dissociation of personality, though at the same time he owns that "In the case of some noble but psychopathic personalities the split-off states do seem to be of real use, though even here it must be remembered the highest and noblest part of the man is his conscious personality. Especially in the case of many great religious leaders do we find psychopathic conditions that seem to have contributed a good deal toward making them the useful men they were. Consider, for example, Ezekiel, Mohammed, George Fox, St. Paul—the reader will be able to add to the list many other names."[1]

Yet in spite of this he is bound to say on a later page: "May it then be that the mystics are the seers of our world, and that whenever they open the eyes of their souls, the Eternal Light pours in; and that though we blind ones learnedly describe, generalise, and explain their experience by regular psychological laws which take account only of psychological organism, still the light is really there, and the mystic apprehends it directly, even as he says."[2] St. Theresa would say "Exactly," and would go on to explain the difference between real and hysterical auditions and visions.

First, she says the true divine communication carries its own authority with it,[3] "these words are operative," or, as she puts it elsewhere, "His words are

[1] Rel. Con., p. 66.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 458.
[3] Cp. Mark 11, 27–33.

deeds." "The second sign is a great calm and a devout and peaceful recollection . . . together with a desire to praise God." . . . "The third proof is that these words do not pass from the memory, but remain there for a very long time. . . . This is not the case with what men may utter . . . neither if they prophesy of things to come do we believe them as we do these divine locutions, which leave us so convinced of their truth that, although their fulfilment seems utterly impossible, and we vacillate and doubt about them, there still remains in the soul a certainty of their verity which cannot be destroyed . . . and that finally what was foretold must surely happen; as indeed it does."[1] This seems to be an extraordinarily apt account of the persistence of the Messianic hope in Israel. "If these locutions," she goes on, "proceed from the imagination, they show no such signs, bringing neither conviction, peace, nor interior joy with them."[2]

In the Old Testament we have a series of visions and auditions which answer this test—they were believed and they came to pass. Some were recorded because they did come to pass, others because of the authority they carried which made men believe that in spite of all appearances they *would* come to pass. Lady Julian's division into interior and exterior is simpler than the more detailed one of St. Theresa, and will be followed here in examining them, beginning with the exterior.

These, as St. Theresa says above, may be quite authentic, but she agrees with the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* that they are generally vouchsafed to beginners. "All the revelations that ever saw any man

[1] Int. Cas., VI, iii, 7–9. [2] *Ibid.*, 16.

here in bodily likeness in this life, they have ghostly bemeanings. And I trow that if they unto whom they were shewed had been so ghostly, or could have conceived their bemeanings ghostly, that then they had never been shewed bodily."[1]

In this connection it is interesting that nearly all the visions and auditions recorded in Genesis seem to be of this elementary type, or by dream, which latter mode of communication went out of credit among the later writing prophets ("I have heard what the prophets have said that prophecy lies in my name, saying I have dreamed, I have dreamed. . . . The prophet that hath a dream let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word let him speak my word faithfully"[2]). But both were accepted again in the New Testament as a means of revelation. St. Matthew speaks of dreams making known to Joseph and the magi what they were to do.[3] St. Luke tells of exterior visions and auditions granted to Zacharias, the Virgin Mary and the shepherds.[4] These might well all be at the beginning of such spiritual experiences; we are not told that Simeon heard thus: "the Holy Spirit was upon him."[5]

Later Old Testament instances record these exterior communications as coming to people at the beginning of a spiritual career or when they were not in the temper to receive it "ghostly."

To take examples. In Genesis we are told of communications given to Abraham. Certain instances[6] are definitely exterior. One[7] is spoken of as a vision, in

[1] Cloud, p. 258.
[2] Jer. 23, 25–28.
[3] Matt. 1, 20; 2, 12. 13. 19.
[4] Luke 1–2.
[5] Luke 2, 25–28.
[6] Gen. 15, 17; 17, 1–22; 18, 1–35; 22, 11–18.
[7] Gen. 15, 1.

another "God appeared,"[1] and of others[2] we are not told details.

Hagar[3] and Lot[4] are given exterior visions and auditions. In Genesis 26, 2. 24 the Lord "appeared to Isaac." Jacob, in Genesis 28, "dreamed," while the angels at Mahanaim are apparently an exterior vision,[5] followed[6] by what appears to be intended to be the account of another at Jabbok. No manner is specified in two further instances.[7] Laban also has a dream.[8]

Later on, in Exodus, Moses' vision at the Bush[9] was apparently an exterior one at the beginning of his prophetic career. The inauguration of the Covenant at Sinai before an ignorant people was accompanied by visible and audible signs.[10] In Numbers[11] there is the account of an exterior manifestation to a group of which two at least were not in a state of mind to hear "ghostly." But what is meant by the Lord speaking "mouth to mouth even manifestly" to Moses[12] and later in Deuteronomy[13] by a prophet "whom the Lord knew face to face" we cannot tell, though it would look as if the narrators were of opinion that exterior communications were the highest favour. We are, however, given no details. Again, Balaam, the semi-accredited seer, receives communications after three manners.[14] At first, while he is still neutral, after what was apparently his usual fashion, intelligently, at night, possibly by dream. Later, as he goes wilfully against

[1] Gen. 17, 1. [2] Gen. 12, 1; 13, 14; 22, 1.
[3] Gen. 16, 7 and 21, 17. [4] Gen. 19.
[5] Gen. 32, 1. [6] Gen. 32, 24–29.
[7] Gen. 31, 3 and 35, 1. [8] Gen. 31, 24.
[9] Exod. 3.
[10] Exod. 19, 16–20; 24, 10–11; cp. Deut. 4, 10–13.
[11] Num. 12, 5–9. [12] Num. 12, 8.
[13] Deut. 34, 10. [14] Num. 22, 9. 20. 31; 23, 16.

his better judgment, by exterior vision. Then, when he persisted, the matter was taken out of his power altogether and the word was "put in his mouth." Moses' visions in Exodus 33, 17–23; 34, 6 will be discussed elsewhere, but it is noteworthy that in an account which purports to be of the beginnings of religious experience and direct revelation the phenomena recorded should be of revelation by modes which later experience has shown to be appropriate to that stage of spiritual development. It is especially notable, if it be true that the records were finally edited at a date when the more interior form of revelation appears to have been in use.

These exterior revelations are elsewhere generally recorded at the beginning of a spiritual career. Gideon's conversation with the angel of the Lord at Ophrah was as exterior as the manifestations in Genesis[1]—it was not till the end of the interview that the angel was recognised. Manoah's wife took the angel for a man of God;[2] Joshua, for an unknown warrior.[3] Samuel was called by an exterior audition;[4] in 2 Samuel 24, 17 and 1 Chronicles 21, 16. 20. 21 the same word is used for seeing David and seeing the angel. The visions in Ezekiel 1, 4 and 3, 22 were apparently exterior. Then in the New Testament, when prophecy had long been silent, Saul was called by an exterior audition,[5] as was also Cornelius.[6] Perhaps the deliverances in Acts 5, 19 and 12, 7–12 hardly come under the same category, nor the vision on the Mount of Transfiguration. The accounts of the latter in Matthew and Mark speak of it as if it were an exterior vision, but Luke has the interesting addition,[7] "Now Peter

[1] Judges 6, 11–23. [2] Judges 13. [3] Josh. 5, 13–15.
[4] 1 Sam. 3, 4–21. [5] Acts 9, 7; 26, 13. 14. [6] Acts 10, 3.
[7] Luke 9, 32.

and they that were with him were heavy with sleep; but when they were fully awake they beheld His glory and the two men that stood with him," which recalls Zechariah 4, 1, "And the angel that talked with me came again and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep," and then showed him a vision. It also resembles two passages in Daniel,[1] all of which seem to imply some more interior mode of sight. Whatever the date of Daniel it contains one or two allusions to modes of audition that can be illustrated from other sources.

Another case in which we find exterior communications in use is when the state of mind of the hearer is such that he cannot hear or see otherwise, as it was with Elijah at Sinai.[2]

The question is, what do these people mean when they say they "heard" or "saw"? We are apparently meant to take it quite literally that they did hear and see things from another order of being. Samuel heard a voice speaking so clearly that he thought it was Eli calling.[3] Elijah at Sinai heard the still small voice after the same manner that he heard the storm.[4] There are many instances of messages sent by the prophets between these two instances, but no description of the mode is given. It seems that Elisha's power of seeing spiritual things was tested at Elijah's translation, and that he really did see an exterior vision.[5] Exterior vision and audition together are implied for Moses at the Bush,[6] and for Ezekiel, at all events, in his first experiences;[7] Saul implies them in Acts;[8] in both accounts it is mentioned that his companions heard and saw *something* but were not able to receive it, a

[1] Dan. 8, 18 and 10, 9. 10.
[2] 1 Kings 19, 5–18.
[3] 1 Sam. 3, 4–14.
[4] 1 Kings 19, 11–13.
[5] 2 Kings 2, 11.
[6] Exod. 3, 1–5.
[7] Ezek. 1, 4–28; 3, 22. 24.
[8] Acts 9, 3–7 and 22, 9.

point illustrated by the differing apprehension of the "voice" in St. John 12, 29. The visions seen by Zacharias, the Virgin Mary and Cornelius were all apparently exterior, and St. Luke carefully distinguishes in Acts 10 between the vision of Cornelius which was seen "openly" and that of Peter which was seen in "a trance," and he is careful to tell us that Peter in prison[1] had an objective experience, but thought he saw a vision.

Those who give us these accounts were sure that there was something to be seen if a man had eyes to see and that certain men had their eyes open to these things and did see them. There is an interesting series of instances in an ascending scale dealing with the idea of the eyes being opened to see what is actually there. First, Hagar's are opened to a material object. "God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water"[2]; then Balaam's to a spiritual one. "The Lord opened the eyes of Balaam and he saw the angel."[3] Then there is the story of Elisha and the Syrians in which we have not only the opening of the eyes of Elisha's servant to see the angel guard, but the closing of the eyes of the Syrians, that they might recognise neither Elisha nor the city of Samaria until their eyes were opened again; that, rather than a complete blindness, would seem to be implied by the story.[4] The same thing is suggested in the story of the two disciples going to Emmaus. "Their eyes were holden that they should not know Him." Then at the breaking of the bread "their eyes were opened and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight."[5]

These instances are practically all those in the Bible

[1] Acts 12, 9. [2] Gen., 21, 19. [3] Num. 22, 31.
[4] 2 Kings 6, 8–23. [5] Luke 24, 16. 31.

of which we can definitely say that the narrators plainly intend us to understand that something was seen or heard with the outward eye or ear. There are, however, many more modern instances, a few of which may be quoted as bearing out the principles that have been suggested.

Did St. Augustine actually hear a child playing, or was it a spiritual voice which he heard that brought about his conversion? If it were an audition it was certainly an exterior one. His account leaves the question open. "Lo, from a neighbouring house I heard a voice, as of a boy or girl, I know not, singing and oft repeating, 'Take, read. Take, read.' Instantly, with a changed countenance, I began to think most intently, whether boys in any kind of game used to sing such a phrase; nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So checking the torrent of my tears, I arose; interpreting it to be no other than a Divine command to open the book, and read the first chapter I should find."[1] St. Augustine, like St. Paul, had been living under great nervous strain for some time before his call, and this very definite call seems to have been necessary to help them to overcome the inhibitions, moral and intellectual, which stood in the way of their change of mind.

Suso tells of a somewhat different instance. "A secular man from a foreign country" sought him, saying that a little while ago he had been in despair and on the point of suicide. "I had already taken a run with the deliberate purpose of drowning myself. I heard a voice above me say, 'Stop! stop! Put not thyself to this shameful death; seek a friar preacher,' and the voice named you to me by name which I had

[1] Confessions, viii, 12.

never heard before, and it said, 'He will help you and set you right!'"—which he did.[1] Suso gives several other instances of much the same kind. This is one of the most definite for our purpose.

Bunyan was much troubled with auditions, both interior and exterior, both those which he says were heavenly and those which were of diabolical origin. It is not always clear from his account how they were heard. Once he said he was warned by the text, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you." Then he heard a voice calling behind him, "Simon, Simon!" The last time it called him "I turned my head over my shoulder thinking verily that some man had behind me called me; being at a great distance, methought he called so loud,"[2] but most of his experiences seem to belong rather to the second category of communication.

Coming nearer to our own day, there are several interesting examples in *Hudson Taylor in Early Years*, the founder of the China Inland Mission.

The first is one told in 1844 by a speaker at a camp meeting. It had happened to a man the speaker had known in Tasmania, of the name of Gardener. "Walking up Cataract Hill . . . he had even been startled by a voice behind him earnestly saying: 'Gardener, give Me thy heart.' He turned to face the speaker, but no one was in sight." He heard it again: "My son, give Me thy heart." But it would have upset his plans to become a Christian just then, so he put by the call. Shortly afterwards, being violently tempted to kill his partner for a sum of money he possessed, he was unable to resist, and presently murdered him. He told the story to the chaplain the night before his execution.[3]

[1] Suso, chap. 61. [2] Grace Abounding, 93. [3] H.T., pp. 60–62.

Another instance tells of a Chinese farmer who lay sick at home, and in terror of death. "And then a strange thing happened. In the silence of the empty house he heard himself called. The voice, though unknown, was so real that he got up and made his way to the door, but on opening it could see no one. Painfully he crept back to bed, only to hear the same voice a little later calling more urgently. Again he rose, and, supporting himself by the walls and furniture, managed to reach the door. But again no one was in sight. Greatly alarmed, he buried his face beneath the coverlet. . . . And now the voice spoke a third time, and told him not to be afraid. He was going, it said, to recover. An infusion of a certain herb would cure his sickness, and as soon as he was able he was to go into Ning-po, where he would hear of a new religion that would bring him peace of heart." He did as he was bidden, worked his way to Ning-po, and there met a former neighbour who brought him to Christ and he became one of the most useful of the missionaries' native helpers.[1]

Two other visions granted to people at the beginning of a career of Christian work, both of which were apparently exterior, were the visions of Christ seen by Catherine of Genoa, and by Finney, two very different people, neither of whom had visions subsequently. The vision seen by Sundar Singh on the night of his conversion, also apparently exterior, will be treated of in the next chapter.

It will have been noticed that these exterior communications of which examples have been given, were made when there was no human means of reaching the person dealt with, either because of his mental

[1] H.T., p. 474.

state or his isolation. The following account from *A Thousand Miles of Miracle in China* illustrates this point still further. Mr. Glover, his wife, their two children, and Miss Gates, a lady missionary, were fleeing for their lives from the Boxers. They had taken refuge in a little hollow on the top of a hill, where, exposed to the full glare of the sun, they waited throughout the scorching day, hoping that their faithful Chinese servant would be able to bring them some help. It was a time of thirst and intense strain. The two women were in a state of collapse, and yet they dared not come out of their place of hiding to go down to the stream below and drink, for fear of being murdered. Then, "As my dear wife and I were pleading with God for her [Miss Gates's] recovery, I heard a word behind me, as distinctly as if it were spoken in my ear—'Up, get thee down and tarry not.' I said to my wife, 'Come, darling, we must gather up what strength remains to us and go down to the water. It is not the will of God that we should remain here any longer.' Then, taking Miss Gates by the arm, I bent over her and said, 'Dear sister, we must be going without delay. In the name of the Lord Jesus, get up!' In a moment consciousness was restored, and she rose up." They went down, drank, and had hardly taken shelter under some trees when a small party of yamen officials with a cart appeared, who took charge of them, and they were saved for at all events the next stage of their journey. "Twenty minutes later and we should have been too late! The procession would have gone on and the cart with it, and we should have been left to the rabble. Then it was that I understood the urgency of that Voice . . . and how truly it had been the Voice of God. Then,

too, it was that I realised how the strength to rise up and get down was given where, humanly speaking, it was an impossibility."[1]

One more instance—Dorothy Kerin, writing of her experience of divine healing in 1912. She received Holy Communion when it was thought that she was past hope of recovery, and "In the evening I asked my little sister to sing 'Abide with me,' as all was then so dark. She did not know it well enough to sing, but as she sat by my bed with my hand in hers, we heard it sung from beginning to end most beautifully. My sister heard it as distinctly as I did, and said 'Oh, how wonderful!' We are certain it must have been the holy angels who sang it, for there was no one singing either in the house or outside." Then she had what was apparently an interior vision of our Lord, after which "a great light came all round me, and an Angel took my hands in his and said, 'Dorothy, your sufferings are over. Get up and walk.' He passed his hands over my eyes and touched my ears, and then I opened my eyes and found myself sitting up in bed.". . . She said she must get up. "The Angel said to me again, 'Get up and walk.' Then they brought the dressing-gown, and when I had put it on I got out of bed unassisted. Part of the light came to the right side of the bed, and I put my hand on it and it led me out of the room and along a passage and then back into my room again."[2]

As was said above, nearly all these cases of exterior vision and audition came at the beginning of a spiritual experience or when the person concerned was not in a state of mind to hear an interior voice. The same

[1] 1000 Miles, pp. 172, 178.
[2] The Living Touch, pp. 7–10.

was the case with two instances which were told me personally. A Chinese missionary told me how he had been attacked while itinerating, and fled from the inn in which he had been resting, leaving his books, etc., behind. Then he heard a voice saying, perfectly audibly, "Be not afraid of their terror," and, said he, "The fear went," and he went back and secured his books unmolested. Another time during the war a young fellow's mother told, in the presence of her son, that while he was taking a message at the Front, he had stopped, hearing his name called. On looking round there was no one, but a shell had fallen just where he would have been if he had gone on. I was told that the same thing happened to many others.

The same year (1915) when I visited an old woman in my neighbourhood, she told how some fifteen years before she had been lying alone ill, when she saw our Lord stand by her and heard Him say, "Be not afraid. It is I." The memory was, she said, still vivid. She was said to be a "reformed character," but whether the reformation dated from that experience I did not hear. The parish priest said that he had heard many similar stories from uneducated people, and seemed to think they signified very little.

There is one interesting exception to the general principle of the use of exterior manifestations noted above. Catherine of Siena told Fr. Raymund of Capua, her confessor and one of her biographers, "I was never taught the rule of spiritual life by any man or woman, but only by my Lord and Master Jesus Christ, Who made it known to me either by secret inspiration or else appearing openly to me and speaking to me as I now speak to you." She declared also that in the beginning her visions were for the most part

only wrought in the imagination, but they were afterwards sensible, so that she saw with her eyes the Form that appeared to her, and heard with her ears the sound of the voice that spoke.[1] But later we are told with many examples "that she saw more distinctly the souls than the bodies of those who approached her,"[2] so that her whole hearing and seeing may have been abnormal.

She gives, however, practically the same criterion whereby to judge the validity of visions as does Theresa. Our Lord said to her: "By this thou mayest know if thy vision be from Me or from the enemy; of Truth or of falsehood; if they come of Truth they will make thy soul humble, if they come of falsehood they will make thee proud."[3]

All these more modern instances just given have been purposeful, and except in one case they have been effective in what they were meant to do. There is also enough likeness between the conditions in which they are used for us to say that the instances recorded of exterior vision and audition in the Old Testament seem to have been of a similar nature, and that man has been so planned that in case of need God can use the eyes and ears He has made to convey intimations from Himself at times when other methods are not available. It were indeed a strange architect who should plan a temple to which all should be admitted except himself.

[1] C. of S., p. 40. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 87. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

CHAPTER V

THE CALL TO THE PROPHETIC OFFICE

SO far we have only touched the fringe of the prophetic office, dealing with experiences common to people at many stages of the spiritual life, but chiefly in its more elementary development, and liable to be counterfeited, either by auto- or hetero-suggestion, yet which do appear sometimes to be made the means of conveying genuine divine communications.

But we are warned that this hearing and carrying of divine messages is only a very small part of the prophetic life. It is indeed the work to which a prophet is called, but the discharge of his office requires the background of a life lived before God ("The LORD before whom I stand,"[1]), a life of steady discipline and obedience. The literary output of the prophets which has come down to us is astonishingly small. A popular preacher of the present day will print more matter in a year than an Isaiah, a Jeremiah, or an Ezekiel has left of half a century's ministry. Very probably the greater part of their preaching has not come down to us, but even so we find long periods of retirement in their lives when they did not exercise their ministry. Clearly it was required of a prophet not only that he should be a man who was sufficiently "sensitive" or "psychic" to be able to hear a message, but that he

[1] 1 Kings 17, 1; cp. 2 Kings 5, 25 and 1 Kings 10, 8.

should be able to hold his tongue when he had no message to give, and to live the disciplined life which was the condition of vision.

Such a man being found, he was called to the work. We are not always given details of the mode of the call, but in certain instances at least we are told that it was accompanied by something in the nature of a vision of God which was on a few occasions exterior, and the later visions are fuller than the earlier ones. Considering the position given to Moses in the national history as the man who spoke to God face to face and was made the mediator of that covenant relationship which was held to be the *raison d'être* of Israel's existence, it is remarkable that the account of visions granted to him is much simpler than that of visions seen by Isaiah and Ezekiel. Moses' call was by the voice from the Burning Bush.[1] Later, at Sinai, it was impossible for him to see the full vision of the Lord.[2] This record of the limitation of the great leader's vision seems to point to the preservation of some genuine tradition. We are, it seems, meant to understand an objective vision in both cases. The next call recorded is that of the nation at Sinai.[3] There the vision is only of the thick, fiery cloud and the terrible words, a manifestation of a character which—as was seen in the last chapter—it was possible for people at a low stage of spiritual development to receive. But in view of that and of the definite limitation of the vision of Moses, it is difficult to account for the description of the covenant feast of the elders, when "they beheld God, and did eat and drink."[4]

The call of Samuel again was by exterior audition,[5]

[1] Exod. 3, 2–4.
[2] Exod. 33, 17–23.
[3] Exod. 19 and 20.
[4] Exod. 24, 9–11.
[5] 1 Sam. 3, 1–14.

and we have no further full record of a prophetic call until Isaiah's except that Amos says, "The LORD took me from following the flock."[1]

With Isaiah we come to a far more detailed vision. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple."[2] He saw also the heavenly court and heard the word of the Lord giving him his commission.

Ezekiel by the river Chebar apparently received his call through an objective vision. It has been suggested that there is a certain solar phenomenon sometimes visible in Mesopotamia which may have furnished the starting-point of his vision of the heavenly chariot, but, in addition, he sees "the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone (in Exodus 24, the pavement was of sapphire), and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man upon it above," all shot through with the appearance of fiery glory.[3]

From Jeremiah 1, 9 we conclude that the call of the prophet was accompanied by a vision, but he gives no details.

The call of the apostles by our Lord during His incarnate life does not come into the question under discussion. But the call of Saul[4] was, as pointed out before, apparently an objective vision.

Elijah's recommissioning at Sinai[5] was accompanied by an exterior audition, and the commission of the seer of Patmos for his special work was by the vision of the Lord, not apparently objective, but given when he was "in the spirit."

So we are told that some at least of the men who

[1] Amos 7, 15.
[2] Isa. 6.
[3] Ezek. 1, 26–28.
[4] Acts 9, 7; 1 Cor. 15, 8.
[5] 1 Kings 19, 9–18.

were called to a special life of witness were given their commission in a personal vision or audition by God Himself. Sometimes, as in the case of Ezekiel, the vision recurs, sometimes it seems to be unique in that particular form.

Other saints have left records of a similar call by which their life work was practically fixed, and all bear out the observation of Prof. James,[1] that "there is one form of sensory automatism which possibly deserves special notice on account of its frequency. I refer to hallucinatory or pseudo-hallucinatory luminous phenomena, *photisms*, to use the term of the psychologists. St. Paul's blinding heavenly vision seems to have been a phenomenon of this sort; so does Constantine's cross in the sky. Henry Alline mentions a light about whose externality he seems uncertain. Col. Gardiner sees a blazing light." He might have added St. Theresa's statement that "the splendour of Him who is revealed in the vision resembles an infused light, as of the sun, covered with a veil as transparent as a diamond, if such a texture could be woven."[2] What is this but the externalising of what St. John says: "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all,"[3] and Christ's words: "I am the light of the world."[4] That is as it may be, but in most of the instances we have quoted from the Bible the vision was accompanied by fiery light, and the same account is generally given in the latter manifestations which will now be brought forward.

First, the vision of Catherine of Siena by which her vocation was fixed. Catherine's legend is so full of the marvellous that it is somewhat risky to quote,

[1] Var. of Rel. Exp., p. 252.
[2] Int. Cas., VI, ix. 3.
[3] 1 John 1, 5.
[4] John 8, 12.

and, consequently, some cautious biographers omit the greater part of that side of it. But it seems to be certain that when she was six she saw the vision which fixed her vocation. One account of it is as follows: She was going on an errand with her brother "when, raising her head and looking towards the Church of San Domenico on the opposite hill, Catherine saw in the heavens a majestic throne set, as it were, upon the gable-end of the church, on which throne appeared our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, crowned with a tiara, and wearing pontifical robes, while beside Him stood" various saints. As she stood looking "she beheld how our Lord stretched out His right hand towards her, and made over her the sign of the cross." She stood absorbed until her brother came and took her by the hand to lead her home and roused her "as it were out of a deep sleep," and from that time she was no more a child.[1] The vision changed her from being a good little girl into a person with a definite aim in life, to be conformed to the Lord she had seen.

A different experience was that of Stephen Grellet about 1798. He had been converted for some years, and had been recognised among the Friends as a preacher, when, during an epidemic of yellow fever, he was so near to death that his coffin was ordered. But "whilst death seemed to be approaching, and I turned myself on one side, the more easily to breathe my last, my spirit, feeling already as encircled by the angelic host in the Heavenly Presence, a secret but powerful language was proclaimed on this wise: 'Thou shalt not die, but live—thy work is not yet done.' Then the corners of the earth, over seas and lands, were opened to me, where I should have to labour in the

[1] C. of S., pp. 13–14.

service of the gospel of Christ. Oh, what amazement I was filled with! What a solemn and awful prospect was set before me! Sorrow took hold of me at the words: for it seemed as if I had had already a foothold in the heavenly places. I wept sore, but as it was the Divine will I bowed in reverence before Him."[1] He recovered, and said nothing to anyone, but in a meeting not long after "Arthur Howell, in the course of his testimony mentioned me by name, and said that the Lord had raised me up, having a service for me in the isles and nations afar off, to the east and west, the north and south."[2] In later years he travelled throughout New England and Europe preaching, with very remarkable results.

Another noted missioner—Charles Finney—was also called by a vision which has several points in common with that of Isaiah.

It was about 1821, and Finney was a young man in a lawyer's office. He had had few religious privileges, but found many allusions to Biblical principles in some of the old legal authorities. This excited his curiosity, and he began to read the Bible, but found little help in the teachings of the local ministry. One day he gave himself entirely to Christ. That evening, wanting to be alone, he went into the room behind the front office to pray.

"There was no fire and no light in the room; nevertheless it appeared as if it were perfectly light. As I went in and shut the door it seemed as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ face to face. It did not occur to me that it was wholly a mental state; it seemed that I saw Him as I would see any other man. He said nothing, but looked at me in such a manner as to break

[1] Grellet, pp. 41–42. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

me right down at his feet. I have always since regarded this as a most remarkable state of mind, for it seemed that He stood before me, and I fell down at His feet, and poured out my soul to Him."[1]

Yet another example of the call to an apostolic career by a vision is that of Sundar Singh. In great spiritual distress he had determined that if he gained no satisfaction for his soul by five in the morning he would kill himself. "At 4.30 I saw something of which I had no idea at all previously. In the room where I was praying I saw a great light. I thought the place was on fire. I looked round but could find nothing. . . . Then, as I prayed and looked into the light, I saw the form of the Lord Jesus Christ. It had such an appearance of glory and love. . . . I heard a voice saying, in Hindustani, 'How long will you persecute Me? I have come to save you; you were praying to know the right way. Why do you not take it?' The thought then came to me, 'Jesus Christ is not dead, but living, and it must be He Himself.' So I fell at His feet and got this wonderful Peace which I could not get anywhere else."[2]

Later he undertook a forty days' fast, which he regards as a definite step in his spiritual life. "In the course of the fast he saw Christ; not, he says, as at his conversion, with his physical eyes, because they were now dim and could not see anything, but in a spiritual vision, with pierced hands, bleeding feet, and radiant face."[3]

These visions, both those recorded in the Bible and those of later date, were very effectual as a preparation for the work to which they called the seers, unifying

[1] Finney, p. 17.
[2] The Sadhu, p. 6.
[3] The Sadhu, p. 25.

their wills for the life of discipline and danger to which they were now committed.

It was a life of discipline and purging of desires, as we have already seen, for, as the prophets of old declared, self-seeking and self-indulgence blinded the eyes. Seeking to please men, says Ezekiel, is another cause of false prophecy, and Zephaniah was not the last who saw the best spiritual hopes for his people in poverty.[1] John Woolman tells how in 1764 an old Friend stood up in the yearly meeting and said that "he had been a member of our Society for upwards of sixty years, and he well remembered that in those early times Friends were a plain, lowly-minded people, and that there was much tenderness and contrition in their meetings. That at twenty years from that time, the Society increasing in wealth and in some degree conforming to the fashions of the world, true humility was less apparent, and their meetings in general were not so lively and edifying. That at the end of forty years many of them were grown very rich, and many of the Society made a specious appearance in the world. . . . And as such things became more prevalent, so the powerful overshadowings of the Holy Ghost were less manifest in the Society."[2] On his arrival in England Woolman bears a witness which would have satisfied Zephaniah upon the way in which Friends had mixed themselves with trafficking. "Members of our Society worked in superfluities, and bought and sold them, and thus dimness of sight overcame many."[3] The prophet might have only one love, and in obedience to it he might not indulge in fear. He must go where he was sent. The whole

[1] Zeph. 1, 17–18; 3, 11–13.
[2] Woolman, pp. 187–8.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 237.

interview in Exod. 3 and 4 is punctuated by Moses' attempts to have himself excused from the work to which he was called, but nevertheless he was held to it relentlessly. Jeremiah's ministry begins in much the same way. "Then said I, 'Ah, Lord GOD! behold I cannot speak, for I am a child.' But the LORD said unto me, 'Say not I am a child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak.'"[1] And all through his ministry we see in Jeremiah a shrinking from the heavy task which he was made to carry through. A like charge is given to Ezekiel. "And thou son of man be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions, be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear."[2]

We may believe that nothing less than the vision of the Most High could have nerved the prophet for such a task as that to which he was committed, for he was opposed not only to the social habits of his people, but to their most distinguished popular preachers and teachers.

The very scantiness of their records is one sign of the honesty and self-control of the true prophets. We have not many details of the methods of the false prophets, but one characteristic seems to be implied. They were generally ready to give an "oracle" at short notice, and to speak freely upon any occasion. The true prophet waited for his message, even though he was practically sure what it would be; as Jeremiah, openly contradicted by Hananiah, gave no counter

[1] Jer. 1, 6–7. [2] Ezek. 2, 6–7; 3, 8–11.

oracle, but "went his way" until he was sent back with a definite "word of the LORD." Again, after the destruction of Jerusalem, when Johanan and the others came to him to ask advice, he waited ten days for a sure word, though when it came it was what he had been saying all the time.[1] In this we are reminded of Christ's repeated saying in St. John's Gospel, "Mine hour is not yet come."[2] God, to whom all hearts are open, knows the exact moment at which His words must be spoken to have the effect He intends to produce.

Something of this obedience of the prophet is to be found in John Woolman; we see in him that same feeling of responsibility for the message given to him which makes St. Paul so careful in his epistles to distinguish between what "I say of myself," and what is given him by the Spirit.[3] It is impossible with our lack of data to speak too positively about pre-Christian conditions, but such records as we have of Christian men and women who lived in close touch with Him who is the Truth go to show that it bred in them a great conscientiousness which finds a very clear expression in John Woolman.

He writes: "One day, being under a strong exercise of the spirit, I stood up and said some words in a meeting; but not keeping close to the Divine opening, I said more than was required of me. Being soon sensible of my error, I was afflicted in mind some weeks, without any light or comfort, even to that degree that I could not take pleasure in anything . . . being thus humbled and disciplined under the cross, my understanding became more strengthened to distinguish the pure spirit which inwardly moves on the heart, and

[1] Jer. 28 and 42. [2] John 2, 4; 7, 6–8. [3] 1 Cor. 7, 10. 12, etc.

which taught me to wait in silence sometimes many weeks together, until I felt that rise which prepares the creature to stand like a trumpet through which the Lord speaks to His flock. . . . I was taught to watch the pure opening, and to take heed lest, while I was standing to speak, my own will should get uppermost, and cause me to utter words from worldly wisdom, and depart from the channel of the true gospel ministry." Some little time later he went on a mission tour with a friend who was "frequently strengthened to publish the word of life amongst them. As for me, I was often silent through the meetings, and when I spoke it was with much care, that I might speak only what truth opened."[1] This has a suggestion of St. Paul's caution to the Corinthians that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets,"[2] and are not to be allowed to run away with them.

It was as important that the prophet should not speak when he had no message as that he should speak when he had; that he should learn to be silent. So we find Isaiah told to bind up the testimony and wait,[3] and Ezekiel's grim, mysterious silences—inhibitions, we might call them now—were to be as much a sign as his speech.[4] Woolman again speaks of his care—"from day to day to say neither more nor less than what the spirit of truth opened in me, being jealous over myself lest I should say anything to make my testimony look agreeable to that mind in people which is not in pure obedience to the cross of Christ."[5] And so, say the letters written after his death, Woolman's ministry "was very sound, deep and penetrating. . . .

[1] Woolman, pp. 50–51, 56. [2] 1 Cor. 14, 32.
[3] Isa. 8, 16–17.
[4] Ezek. 3, 26–27; 24, 27; 29, 21; 33, 21–22.
[5] Woolman, p. 140; cp. Ezek. 13, 6. 16.

In transacting the affairs of the discipline his judgment was sound and clear."[1] Thus, though his conscientiousness may now and then appear hypersensitive, it is evident that it made him a man who could be trusted with a direct message, which was one of the functions of the prophet. Many of his scruples are of the kind which St. Paul cast to the winds (notably that which made him only write short letters, for fear lest the post-horses should be overburdened), but where Woolman's inspiration was a streamlet whose course had to be kept clear, St. Paul's was a torrent which carved out a course for itself, and gave little chance for weeds to grow up and divert it.

Closely allied to this care in speaking was the obligation to speak when the word was given. The prophet might have to be silent when what looked like a good opportunity arose, he had also to speak when he might wish to be silent.

We have spoken before of the conception of the prophet as a watchman responsible to those in the town below,[2] but beside this there is the power of the word in his heart insisting on being spoken. "If I say I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in mine heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain,"[3] and so it goes on, from "The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy"[4] to "Necessity is laid upon me; for woe is me if I preach not the gospel."[5]

The prophetic message may be pain and grief to see and to speak.[6] The prophecy of Jeremiah, like that

[1] Woolman, p. 261. [2] Ezek. 3, 16–21; 33, 1–9.
[3] Jer. 20, 9. [4] Amos 3, 8. [5] 1 Cor. 9, 16.
[6] Isa. 16, 9–11; 21, 1–4; 22, 4–5; Jer. 4, 19–22; 15, 15–18; Ps. 39, 2.

of Hosea, is broken with sobs, but the prophet might not be wise for himself, his knowledge was given to be passed on.

The same description of the fiery compulsion is found in other seers. Behmen says: "With the eyes of my spirit I saw God. I saw both what God is, and how God is what He is. And with that came an uncontrollable impulse to put it down, so as to preserve what I had seen . . . the truth of God did burn in my bones till I took pen and ink and began to set it down." He continues, that when the Spirit was taken away he could not always understand what he had written, and prayed that the matters should be given to a more learned man. "But He always put my prayer away from Him and continued to kindle His fire in my bones."[1]

Fox in 1651 felt himself commanded to go to Lichfield.[2] He got within a mile. "Then I was commanded by the Lord to pull off my shoes. I stood still, for it was winter; and the word of the Lord was like a fire in me. So I put off my shoes and left them with the shepherds. . . . Then I walked on about a mile, and as soon as I was within the city, the word of the Lord came to me again, saying 'Cry, Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield,'" and as he went he saw the city full of blood. John Woolman uses a different metaphor. "My heart was like a vessel that wanted vent. For several weeks after my arrival, when my mouth was opened in meetings, it was like the raising of a gate in a water-course when a weight of water lay upon it."[3]

The testimony of Sarah Grubb (1773–1842) gives

[1] Quoted R. E. Welsh, "Classics of the Soul's Quest," p. 206.
[2] Fox, p. 57. [3] Woolman, p. 245.

another illustration :[1] " . . . Often have I hesitated and felt such a reluctance to it, that I have suffered the meeting to break up without having made the sacrifice ; yea, when the word of life in a few words was like a fire within me. . . . No one knows the depth of my sufferings and the mortifying, yea, crucifying of my own will, which I had to endure in this service ; yet I have to acknowledge to the sufficiency of Divine grace therein. . . . At Bath I had to go to the Pump Room and declare the truth to the gay people who resorted there. . . . In these days and years of my life I was seldom from under some heavy burden, so that I went greatly bowed down."

It would indeed appear that this feeling of compulsion is part of the meaning of the word translated "burden" or "oracle" which occurs in many prophecies of Isaiah[2] and others, until in the time of Jeremiah it had become so cheapened—somewhat as the expression "message" is now in certain quarters—that reputable prophets gave up its use.[3] Ezekiel seems to substitute "the hand of the Lord was upon me," or "was heavy upon me."[4] The meaning in both cases seeming to be a heavy, directing constraint, a "concern," a feeling of "*must.*"

Fox tells how in the latter part of 1670, after he had been taking meetings in Kent,[5] "We passed towards Rochester. On the way, as I was walking down a hill, a great weight and oppression fell upon my spirit ; I got on my horse again, but the weight remained so that I was hardly able to ride. At length we came to Rochester, but I was much spent, being so extremely

[1] C. L. F. T., pp. 50, 51. [2] Isa. 13–23, etc.
[3] Jer. 23, 33.
[4] Ezek. 3, 14. 22 ; 8, 1 ; 37, 1 ; 40, 1.
[5] Fox, p. 418–21.

laden and burthened with the world's spirits that my life was oppressed under them. . . . " At the house of various friends he "lay all that winter, warring in spirit with the evil spirits of the world that warred against truth and Friends," and for the greater part of the time a violent persecution of the Friends was in progress. Towards the spring it died down, "and I plainly felt, and those Friends that were with me, and that came to visit me, took notice that as the persecution ceased, I came from under the travails and sufferings that had lain with such weight upon me." In 1688 he again writes :[1] "About this time great exercise and weights came upon me (as had usually done before the great revolutions and changes of government) and my strength departed from me, so that I reeled and was ready to fall as I went along the streets."

Stephen Grellet felt something of this when he came to London in 1811. "I soon felt the heavy gospel bonds awaiting me in this metropolis to be rapidly fastening upon me. The depth of exercise into which I was introduced on account of the various classes of its inhabitants is indescribable. Rich and poor . . . . rested heavily upon me."[2] In 1819 he went to Rome, and writes : "My bonds for Rome also feel so heavy that I could not have any pleasure in those things which, were I differently circumstanced, would interest me so much."[3]

Woolman's Journal is full of such experiences. "Having sat a while silent, I felt a weight on my mind, and stood up ; and through the gracious regard of our Heavenly Father strength was given fully to clear myself of a burden which for some days had been

[1] Fox, p. 488. [2] Grellet, p. 74. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

increasing upon me."[1] The whole question of slavery was very much upon his mind, and we frequently meet such words as "I felt an engagement on my mind to have a conference with them in private concerning their slaves."[2] " . . . There yet remained on my mind a secret though heavy exercise in regard to some leading active members about Newport, who were in the practice of keeping slaves."[3] "To speak of that which is the burden of the Word in an easy way to the natural part, doth not reach the bottom of the disorder."[4] "Fifth of fifth month, 1768—I left home under the humbling hand of the Lord, with a certificate to visit some meetings in Maryland."[5]

There is, of course, always the possibility that men so deeply read in their Bibles as these were, suggested to themselves similar experiences to those of which they read, but it seems more probable that in men living in a like relation to God the same Spirit wrought similar experiences. This seems the more probable as we gain our interpretation of what *may* have been the experience of the prophet, from the description given by the later writer. These men were in their measure used to do great works for God. They were not fanciful fanatics. Grellet and Woolman were both good men of business; Finney was a lawyer, Fox a great organiser, and founder of a Society noted for the excellent business capacities of its members. The practical effect of the spiritual experiences of these men gives us the right to believe them genuine—men do not gather figs of thorns—and makes it not unreasonable to believe that those of the prophets were also genuine, and thus enables us to go on with tolerable confidence

[1] Woolman, p. 77. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 143. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 148.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 150. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 200.

to study the other indications of the manner in which they received the messages and "burdens" for which they had been so carefully prepared, and to the proclamation of which they were so insistently driven.

CHAPTER VI

THE PROPHETIC VISION

"Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint: But he that keepeth the law, happy is he."[1]

THE vision and the law are placed in parallelism. The wise man taught that the moral standard of his people, the standard upon which our own has been built up, was not evolved by man's intelligence, but by the vision of the prophet. To the more particular consideration of that vision we now come.

The prophets themselves give very few details of the manner by which they received their communications. Their spiritual processes had not been dissected into the "stick-and-label" state to which we with our modern psychological notions would like to reduce them; nor had they a language suitable for the expression of the subtle distinctions which even St. Theresa candidly says she could never quite understand, even when they had been explained to her. They were content to accept and act upon the message which was the outcome of the experience.

It will, therefore, be easier, as labels have their uses, to begin with some modern instances of what Lady Julian calls "the word formed in mine understanding," the "ghostly showing" of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, the interior audition and vision of the sixteenth-

[1] Prov. 29, 18.

century mystics. As St. Theresa says, "a little fire, also, is as much fire as a great fire, and yet there is a visible difference between them," and the little fire of the later seer will serve to illustrate the nature of the great fire of the early one.

Sundar Singh distinguishes between this mode of hearing and the exterior auditions spoken of in the last chapter. "Some years ago . . . I used to hear voices, and that with these ears (that is, not in the spiritual language of the heavenly world)."[1] St. Theresa says: "The words are very distinctly formed; but by the bodily ear they are not heard. They are, however, much more clearly understood than they would be if they were heard by the ear. It is impossible not to understand them, whatever resistance we may offer. . . . There is another test more decisive still. The words formed by the understanding effect nothing; but when our Lord speaks, it is at once word and work. . . . It seems to me that there is as much difference between these two locutions [divine and auto-suggested] as there is between speaking and listening, neither more nor less; for when I speak, as I have just said, I go on with my understanding, arranging what I am saying; but if I am spoken to by others I do nothing else but listen."[2] Another time she tells how, when she came to a dead stop in her writing, "God enlightened my understanding—at one time suggesting the words, at another shewing me how to use them."[3] With this compare Finney's account of how at a critical moment "this passage of Scripture [Jeremiah 29, 12, 13] seemed to drop into my mind with a flood of light."[4]

[1] Sadhu, p. 150.
[2] Life, xxv, 2–6.
[3] Life, xviii, 10; cp. Matt. 10, 19; Deut. 18, 18; Exod. 4, 12; Acts 4, 8.
[4] Finney, p. 14.

Suso tells how "one day he was rapt in ecstasy, and his bodily senses being abstracted, it was sweetly said to him within his soul: I will show thee to-day the high nobility of My life, and how a sufferer should offer up his sufferings to the praise and glory of a loving God."[1]

Nicholas of Basle was praying the night before his wedding in a sudden repentance, "And at that moment there spoke to me a voice the sweetest and gladdest that ears have ever heard, and thus it spake. 'Thou beloved of my soul, know thou that I Who speak to thee am the Lord of Lords, and the Lord of all things that have ever been, or that ever shall be, and thou hast done well that thou hast given up time for eternity, for few there are who do so in these evil days. . . .'" A year later he heard the voice again, and then after two more years of spiritual struggle he was praying, "And as I spake these words there shone around me, as it were, a fair and blessed light, the light that is love; and from the glory of that light a radiance filled my soul, so that whether I were in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, for my eyes were opened to see the wonder and the beauty that are far above the mind of man, and I cannot speak thereof for there are no words to tell it. . . . And as I was marvelling thereat and rejoicing greatly, I heard as it were the gladdest and sweetest voice, which came not from myself, but yet it came to me as one who spake within me, but it was not my thoughts that it spake."[2]

Fox, in his Journal of 1674, tells that when he was lying very ill in prison, "yet the invisible power did secretly support me, and conveyed refreshing strength

[1] Suso, chap. xxxiii.
[2] Three Friends of God, pp. 227–40.

unto me, even when I was so weak that I was almost speechless. One night as I was lying awake upon my bed in the glory of the Lord which was over all, it was said to me, that the Lord had a great deal more work for me to do for Him, before He took me to Himself."[1]

It will be noticed that in the two latter instances the words were accompanied by a vision of glory such as we read of in Isaiah 6, and Ezekiel and the Revelation. John Woolman gives a modification of the same experience, dated 13 May, 1757. He lay awake one night. "After this, I went to sleep again; in a short time I awoke; it was yet dark, and no appearance of day or moonshine, and as I opened mine eyes I saw a light in my chamber, at the apparent distance of five feet, about nine inches in diameter, of a clear, easy brightness, and near its centre the most radiant. As I lay still looking upon it without any surprise, words were spoken to my inward ear, which filled my whole inward man. They were not the effect of thought, nor any conclusion in relation to the appearance, but as the language of the Holy One spoken in my mind."[2] This may throw a little light on the experience behind such expressions as "the same night the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying . . . According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David"[3]; "I saw in the night."[4] St. Paul's visions recorded in Acts seem to have been seen most frequently by night.[5] It may, of course, mean in a dream, but may also mean that the night was a quiet time, when the necessary stillness of soul

[1] Fox, p. 454.
[2] Woolman, p. 84.
[3] 2 Sam. 7, 4. 17.
[4] Zech. 1, 8.
[5] Acts 16, 9; 18, 9; 23, 11; 27, 23.

could be obtained that the seer might "reflect as a mirror the glory of the Lord."

The foregoing have been instances of interior auditions given when the auditor was, if not in a state of spiritual calm, at all events physically uninterrupted. The following example shows how spiritual calm was made possible under circumstances of constant physical hardship and interruption. "Jesus Himself drew near and talked with us by the way; and the words that He spoke to us, they were spirit and they were life. It was literally as though I heard His living voice beside me. Now He was breathing in my ear, 'Fear not them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.' . . . And I knew it for my Lord's own voice when the words echoed within: 'Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God!'"[1]

As was said above, the prophets give very few hints of the mode in which they received their revelations. The following instances are perhaps those which come nearest to giving us any information. In 2 Kings 20, 4 we read that as Isaiah was returning home, leaving Hezekiah sick unto death, "the word of the Lord came unto him" telling him to return. The circumstances make it probable that it was an interior audition. When the city became hysterical at the approach of the Assyrians and turned to feasting instead of to prayer, "the LORD of Hosts revealed Himself in mine ears: 'Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die,' saith the Lord."[2] Again, "He wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious,

[1] 1000 Miles, pp. 134–5.
[2] Isaiah 22, 14; cp. 1 Sam. 9, 15 marg.

neither turned away backward."[1] It is at all events possible to take these passages as referring to hearing with the inward ear, and also that in Kings,[2] when the wife of Jeroboam in disguise was on her way to Ahijah, "and the LORD said unto Ahijah, 'Behold the wife of Jeroboam cometh.'"

One more passage from the writings of Marmaduke Stevenson, one of the Quaker "Boston Martyrs" of 1659, shows a similarity to the call of Amos, when "the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said unto me, 'Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.'"[3]

"In the beginning of the year 1655 I was at the plough in the east part of Yorkshire, in Old England, near the place where my outward being was; and as I walked after the plough, I was filled with the love and presence of the living God, which did ravish my heart when I felt it, for it did increase and abound in me like a living stream, so did the life and love of God run through me like precious ointment giving a pleasant smell, which made me to stand still. And as I stood a little still, with my heart and mind stayed upon the Lord, the word of the Lord came to me in a still small voice, which I did hear perfectly, saying to me in the secret of my heart and conscience, 'I have ordained thee a prophet unto the nations,' and at the hearing of the word of the Lord I was put to a stand, seeing that I was but a child for such a weighty matter. So, at the time appointed, Barbadoes was set before me, unto which I was required of the Lord to go."[4] Here we have a correspondence with Jeremiah.[5] "Then said I, 'Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I

[1] Isa. 50, 4. 5.
[2] 1 Kings 14, 5.
[3] Amos 7, 15.
[4] C. L. F. T., L. F. T., p. 32.
[5] Jer. 1, 6–7.

am a child.' But the LORD said unto me, 'Say not, I am a child: to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak.'"

As a rule, however, the prophets confine themselves to saying "The word of the Lord came" (about 125 times), or "The Lord spake, saying" (about 80), or some such expression. Ezekiel speaks of the Spirit giving strength to hear.[1] St. Theresa in some measure corroborates this—"My meaning is, that so exceeding great is the power of this vision, when our Lord shows the soul much of His grandeur and majesty, that it is impossible, in my opinion, for any soul to endure it, if our Lord did not succour it in a most supernatural way, by throwing it into a trance or ecstasy, whereby the vision of the divine presence is lost in the fruition thereof."[2]

So far we have spoken of auditions, things heard. The prophets also say "I saw," "He shewed me"; they speak of visions; the "seer" was one of the names of the prophet (the title was growing obsolete when 1 Samuel 9, 9 was written, but Gad is called "David's seer" in 2 Samuel 24, 11, and it seems to have come into use again later, since the Chronicler uses it more than any other writer). The prophet was a man who both heard and saw what others did not. This is brought out in the forcible words of Isaiah, "The Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and closed your eyes, the prophets, and your heads, the seers, hath he covered. [To 'uncover the ear' is one of the descriptions of an audition.[3]] And all vision is become to you as the words of a book that is sealed."[4]

[1] Ezek. 2, 2; 3, 24; cp. Dan. 8, 18; 10, 7–10. 18.
[2] Life, xxviii, 14.
[3] 1 Sam. 9, 15 marg.
[4] Isa. 29, 10–11.

And again, "they are gone astray through strong drink, they err in vision, they stumble in judgment."[1]

Four times Amos says, "Thus the Lord God shewed me: and behold . . ."[2] Jeremiah "saw" the rod of an almond tree, and a seething cauldron,[3] and "the Lord shewed me, and behold, two baskets of fruit."[4] These latter may have been actual baskets of offerings used as a starting-place for the revelation, as elsewhere was the potter, but Ezekiel "sees" from beginning to end, and even when he does not mention a vision his descriptions are pictorial. He was emphatically a "seer."

Stephen "saw" "the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."[5] The expression occurs again and again in Revelation, though the writer tells us that both for what he saw and heard he was "in the Spirit."[6]

Sometimes, as said above, at a more or less elementary stage of development, revelation is made by dreams. These are still held in parts of the East to be an authoritative channel of revelation, and missionaries, especially in Egypt and Persia, can tell remarkable stories of men who have been led to become inquirers, and often converts, through some significant dream. It appears that, in dealing with men, God uses that form of communication which they are disposed to accept as valid, without considering whether it would be so regarded by our more sophisticated intelligences. So in Genesis we find Abimelech, Jacob, Laban, and Pharaoh instructed through dreams.[7] When Saul can get answer in no other way he tries to get it by dreams;[8]

[1] Isa. 28, 7.
[2] Amos 7, 1. 4. 7; 8, 1.
[3] Jer. 1, 11–13.
[4] Jer. 24, 1.
[5] Acts 7, 55.
[6] Rev. 1, 10; cp. also Dan. 8 and 10 *passim*.
[7] Gen. 20, 36; 28, 10; 31, 24; 41, 25.
[8] 1 Sam. 28, 6.

then, prophecy being dumb, dreams are again used in the early chapters of St. Matthew, but they do not appear to have been used for any communications that have come down to us as definitely "prophetic," and Acts [1] mentions trances as the vehicle of vision. Possibly, Luke the Greek did not feel the evidential value of dreams to be so great as did Matthew the Jew. He, moreover, distinguishes clearly between the open vision of Cornelius, the trance of St. Peter, trances and visions by night of St. Paul, the open vision of Zacharias, and the speaking in the spirit of Simeon in a way that seems to suggest a certain amount of investigation of the subject, though he does not go into such details about "intellectual" and "imaginary" visions as does St. Theresa.

Before going on to notice modern examples it is to be observed that the visions seen appear to have been as a rule symbolic. Man cannot see the spiritual verities direct—he has to be taught by parable in sight as well as in word, and thus in the face of the visions recorded of Isaiah, Amos, Ezekiel, and the rest, John can still say with truth, "No man hath seen God at any time." As Lady Julian says,[2] "And then shall we see God face to face, homely and fully. The creature which is made shall see and endlessly behold God which is the maker. For thus may no man see God, which is the maker and the life after, that is to say in this deadly life. But when He of His special grace will shew Himself here, He strengtheneth the creature above itself, and He measureth the shewing after His own will as it is profitable for the time."

The author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* is even more definite. "For that they say of St. Martin and

[1] Acts 10, 10; 22, 17. [2] Julian, chap. 55.

St. Stephen, although they saw such things with their bodily eyes, it was shewed but in miracle and in certifying of thing that was ghostly. . . . For howso His body is in heaven—standing, sitting, or lying—wots no man. . . . For if He shew Him lying, or standing, or sitting, by revelation bodily to any creature in this life, it is done for some ghostly bemeaning: not for no manner of bodily bearing that he hath in heaven."[1] Dr. Skinner, after speaking of the early beginnings of prophecy, continues: "This crude and fragmentary conception of inspiration left far behind, visions and auditions and mysterious inward promptings to speech and action are still part of the prophet's experience, but the field of revelation is no longer confined to them alone. The *meaning* of the vision passes into the prophet's thinking, and becomes the nucleus of a comprehensive view of God and the world from which spring ever fresh intuitions of truth and calls to duty." He goes on to say that this may be expressed in imagery. The prophet interprets what he sees, and "the substance of the revelation is not the mere vision or audition itself, but the truth which it has evoked or symbolised in his mind."[2] Part of this merely puts into modern words what the older writer says about "ghostly bemeanings," and part which refers to the fuller content of the vision will fall to be discussed in a later chapter.

Again, in their account of the visions of the Sadhu, Canon Streeter and Mr. Appasamy say: "He is not only aware, but is urgent to insist, that the sights and words he reports are but shadowy reflections of the reality—in other words, that they are essentially symbolic."[3]

[1] Cloud, pp. 257–60. [2] P. and R., p. 211. [3] Sadhu, p. 141.

To come to the visions: St. Theresa describes what she calls an "intellectual" vision, which may illustrate St. Paul's experiences in Acts 23, 11 and 27, 23. "A person who is in no ways expecting such a favour, nor has ever imagined herself worthy of receiving it, is conscious that Jesus Christ stands by her side, although she sees Him neither with the eyes of the body nor of the soul. . . . Whenever she desired to speak to His Majesty in prayer, or even at other times, He seemed so close that He could not fail to hear her."[1] At other times He shows the soul "in a vision His most sacred Humanity under whatever form He chooses; either as He was during His life on earth, or after His Resurrection. . . . You must understand that though the soul sees this for a certain space of time, it is no more possible to continue looking at it than to gaze for a long time on the sun . . . although its brightness does not pain the interior sight in the same way as the sun's glare injures our bodily eyes. The image is seen by the interior sight alone."[2] Again, in the *Life* she speaks of a vision she saw of Christ: "This vision, though imaginary, I never saw with my bodily eyes, nor, indeed, any other, but only with the eyes of the soul. Those who understand these things better than I do say that the intellectual vision is more perfect than this; and this the imaginary vision, much more perfect than those visions which are seen by the bodily eyes. The latter kind of vision, they say, is the lowest; and it is by these that the devil can most delude us."[3]

In both books she gives a good many other details, and then in the *Foundations* she leaves psychology

[1] Int. Cas., VI, viii, 2, 4. [2] *Ibid.*, VI, ix, 2, 3.
[3] Life, xxviii, 5.

and tells the story of two visions. One of a monk who had made up his mind to render perfect obedience to his superior. He was sent to dig in the garden after a very tiring day, and as he was going down a path "There our Lord appeared to him with the cross on His shoulders, so wearied and worn out that he very well could see that his own fatigue was nothing in comparison of that."[1] The other story is that of Dona Catalina Godinez who, when she professed in 1575, told her that twenty years ago, desiring to find the most perfect religious order that she might profess in it, she had a dream in which she was introduced to a convent where she saw the same sisters she was now professed with, and was shown a Rule of which she wrote down as much as she remembered, and after much inquiry found it to be the rule of the Carmelites.[2]

In the life of Catherine of Siena we are told that on the day she received the habit of Penance she was meditating and saw "before the eyes of her soul" a vision of a tree full of fruit hedged about with thorns, and a hill covered with fair-seeming corn which was, however, withered within, and she understood that the choice of her manner of life was set before her.[3]

Suso tells us that after his penances had been going on some twenty-two years "it seemed to his inward vision that a noble youth came down from above," and told him that he had been long enough in the lower school, he must now come to a higher life. He "took him by the hand and carried him, as it appeared to him, into a land above the ken of sense."[4] After that he gave up his austerities, but a few weeks later "his senses became abstracted, and it seemed to him that

[1] Found., p. 34.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 155.
[3] C. of S., p. 38.
[4] Suso, chap. xxi.

there came in a comely youth of a manly form," who told him what his future sufferings should be. He was terrified until "something spoke within him thus :— 'Be of good cheer. I myself will be with thee and I will aid thee graciously to overcome all these unusual trials.'"[1]

Fox tells that being in Lancaster Castle in 1664[2] "there was a great noise and talk of the Turks overspreading Christendom, and great fears entered many. But one day, as I was walking in my prison chamber, I saw the Lord's power turn against me, and that he was turning back again. And I declared to some what the Lord had let me see . . . and within a month after the news came that they had given him a defeat. Another time, as I was walking in my chamber, with my eye to the Lord, I saw the angel of the Lord with a glittering drawn sword stretched southward, as though the court had been all on fire. Not long after the wars broke out with Holland, the sickness broke forth, and afterwards the fire of London, so the Lord's sword was drawn indeed."

Woolman tells of a vision which calls to mind St. Paul's words,[3] "having the desire to depart and be with Christ . . . yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake."

Woolman had been very ill and was thought to be at the point of death. "After I had lain near ten hours in this condition, I closed my eyes thinking whether I might now be delivered out of the body ; but in these awful moments my mind was livingly opened to behold the church ; and strong engagements were begotten in me for the everlasting well-being of my fellow-

[1] Suso, chap. 22.
[2] Fox, p. 384.
[3] Phil. 1, 23. 24.

creatures."[1] And he was willing to recover and serve them. Again, in 1772, he records a vision in two parts, the first purely symbolical, the second more pictorial. "In a time of sickness, a little more than two years and a half ago, I was brought so near the gates of death that I forgot my name. Being then desirous to know who I was, I saw a mass of matter of a dull, gloomy colour between the south and the east, and was informed that this mass was human beings in as great misery as they could be, and live, and that I was mixed with them, and that henceforth I might not consider myself as a distinct or separate being. In this state I remained several hours. I then heard a soft, melodious voice, more pure and harmonious than any I had heard with my ears before; I believed it was the voice of an angel who spake to the other angels: the words were: 'John Woolman is dead.'" He wondered what it meant. "I was then carried in spirit to the mines where poor oppressed people were digging rich treasures for those called Christians, and heard them blaspheme the name of Christ, at which I was grieved, for His name to me was precious. I was then informed that these heathens were told that those who oppressed them were the followers of Christ, and they said among themselves: 'If Christ directed them to use us in this sort, then Christ is a cruel tyrant.' . . . As I lay still for a time I at length felt a Divine power prepare my mouth so that I could speak, and then I said: 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' . . . Then the mystery was opened and I perceived . . . that the language 'John Woolman is dead' meant no more than the death of my own will."[2]

[1] Woolman, p. 211. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 239, 240.

Bunyan tells of a symbolic vision, which was apparently interior. "About this time the state and happiness of these poor people at Bedford was thus, *in a kind of vision*, presented to me." He saw them on a sunny mountain, surrounded by a high wall, while he was shivering outside in the cold. After a great struggle he succeeded in getting through a narrow gate in the wall, and joined them in the sun.[1]

Dorothy Kerin gives an example of the visions of the night, the expressions in which are reminiscent of some of the descriptions in the Old Testament, though there is a much freer use of adjectives. "One Sunday, in the middle of the night, I was awakened out of my sleep by the sound of exquisite music. Everywhere there was a wonderful Glory-light . . . the atmosphere seemed to throb with 'Holy, Holy, Holy,' and I realised Heaven. Then a great blue mist cleared and revealed three transcendent forms; on the left hand I recognised the angel who had been sent to heal me, on the right the Virgin Mary, and in the centre our Lord. He held His hands over me, and in the palm of each there shone a wonderful red jewel. . . . Great rays of light streamed from the sacred hands and permeated my whole being. The vision then slowly faded and I was again in my bed."[2]

Finally, Sundar Singh gives two points about these interior visions and auditions which bear out St. Theresa's more lengthy and elaborate descriptions. "In Heaven I see not with bodily but with spiritual eyes, and I was told that these spiritual eyes are the same as those which all men will use after permanently leaving the body." "When they speak to me they put their thoughts into my heart in a single moment,

[1] Grace Abounding, 53. [2] Kerin, p. 26.

just as on earth one sometimes knows what a person is going to say before he says it."[1] Elsewhere we read : "The words are words, but they are neither heard nor spoken, the sights are seen and yet not as if with eyes."[2]

So we come back to the prophetic expression of having eyes and ears "opened," and to our Lord's words, "he that hath ears to hear, let him hear."[3] It depends on the development of our spiritual faculties how much we can see or hear of spiritual things.[4]

But the prophet was not only to be a seer and recounter of visions. The visions he saw were not of private interpretation, as were most of those recounted above. They were to exercise a definite effect on the life of the nation ; they contained precepts which were meant to be put into effect by the intelligent co-operation of the seer. That being so, he cannot simply give himself over to the enjoyment of the vision ; he asks questions and receives explanations. The visions containing these colloquies seem to belong to the stage we are now dealing with, for St. Theresa says that in a further stage the soul is taught without them. "A person is far from thinking of seeing anything, no idea of which has crossed the mind, when suddenly the vision is revealed in its entirety. . . . Meanwhile, certain sublime truths have been so impressed on the mind that it needs no other master, for, with no effort of its own, Wisdom Himself has enlightened its former ignorance."[5] This seems to be the "spiritual sight" which Lady Julian says she cannot fully describe. Lady Julian herself asks questions and receives explanations, as does also Sundar Singh, and

[1] Sadhu, pp. 117, 118.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 140.
[3] Cp. John 8, 43. 47 ; 9, 39–41.
[4] 1 Cor. 2, 11–15.
[5] Int. Cas., VI, ix, 7.

we find the same in Amos, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and Zechariah, and the Revelation.

"In these visions we have the most wonderful talks," says Sundar Singh. . . . "There are very many things which I see and hear there, and of which I have a clear picture in my mind, but I can't express them, even in Hindustani, much less in English, and some of them are things that it would be no use even trying to express, because their beauty would be lost if they could be taken out of that world and put into this."[1] But something of what the prophet saw *had* to be translated, and that into an inflexible language. We inherit the spiritual vocabulary they built up, but for a great deal that they saw there can have been no vocabulary, and they had to paint their teaching in broad lines of picture and parable, to our great advantage. Even then it was not possible to make all clear,[2] but the prophet was expected by his followers to see after a different fashion from themselves, and his "dark speech" would be likely to be transmitted by them if he had already made a reputation as one who knew more of the counsel of God than other men. If his word had been proved true in short-period predictions there would be grounds for preserving his predictions of a more distant future, especially if it were not known how distant that future was to be. The man, too, who could tell what *was* had a right to declare what ought to be, in social as well as religious matters.

In effect, we do find that of many of the prophets there are recorded incidents of prediction and insight which would serve to warrant the preservation of their writings and sayings as having permanent as well as immediate value. Elijah seems to have been absorbed

[1] Sadhu, p. 119. [2] 1 Peter 1, 10–12.

by the need of strenuous action, and comparatively few of his words are preserved. Of the later prophets we have comparatively few deeds recorded, though the impression is left that they were men of fearless action in the power of the spirit. And it was the impression they made of being "God-possessed," warranted by the "signs" done in the name of the Lord,[1] that ensured the preservation and partial acceptance of the revolutionary social and moral teaching which they gave in the same Name, teaching so revolutionary that though we still preserve and admire it, we have not yet had the practical faith to try it properly.

[1] Deut. 18, 22.

CHAPTER VII

PREDICTION AND INSIGHT

PREDICTION, says Dr. Skinner, "is not a secondary or accidental feature of Old Testament prophecy even in its highest manifestations, but a central interest round which all other forms of prophetic activity ranged themselves."[1]

This dictum marks a change from the "not foretelling but forth-telling" of which we used to hear in recent years. There is here, however, no intention to discuss prediction in general, only to take up such instances of short-distance prediction as might serve to authenticate the prophets' mission to their contemporaries,[2] and to add such modern instances as may serve to illustrate them.

The two tests propounded in Deuteronomy, continuity with former revelation, and the giving of a sign in the "Name" were, as has already been pointed out, accepted by our Lord.[3] The confidence in the power of the Name to take care of itself is illustrated in Mark 9, 38–39 and in the story in Acts of the sons of Sceva.[4] The Name did not work by magic, as was supposed to be the case with other names of power, it could only be used effectively by properly authorised persons.

[1] P. and R., p. 4. [2] Deut. 18, 22.
[3] Deut. 13, 1; 18, 22; Mark 2, 8–11; 7, 5–13.
[4] Acts 19, 13–16.

The first of the authenticating instances after that of Deborah,[1] are the signs given by Samuel to Saul.[2] They were of a perfectly neutral character, but would serve as well as any others to maintain the ascendancy of the prophetic over the kingly office, which was Samuel's ideal. Later in the history Ahijah foretells both the disruption of the kingdom and the hour of the death of Jeroboam's son.[3]

Elisha, sitting with the elders during the siege of Samaria, prophesied that the siege would be raised that night, and that there would be abundance of provision in the city next day, and also that the particular officer of the king who spoke with him should not eat of it.[4] Several such predictions are recorded of Isaiah. There is the prophecy of the captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia;[5] the prophecies relating to Shebna and Eliakim;[6] that of the destruction of Assyria, and of Hezekiah's recovery and fifteen years longer lease of life, together with the sign of the dial of Ahaz.[7]

It has been said that Amos's sign upon Amaziah[8] was not fulfilled because the captivity of Israel did not come until a generation after Amos. But after the death of Jeroboam, who had given Amaziah his appointment, there were three kings—two of them usurpers—within the year, and it is quite possible that a court favourite would fall with his master without any need to wait for a national destruction.

Jeremiah's prediction of the death of Hananiah[9] had its fulfilment within the year. His prophecy of the

[1] Judges 4, 9.
[2] 1 Sam. 9, 15–10, 9.
[3] 1 Kings 11, 26–39; 14, 6–14.
[4] 2 Kings 6, 33–8, 13.
[5] Isa. 20.
[6] Isa. 22.
[7] Isa. 37 and 38.
[8] Amos 7, 17.
[9] Jer. 28, 15–17.

seventy years' captivity and return was concerned with a more distant event,[1] while his declaration that Nebuchadnezzar would take Tahpanhes[2] had its nearer fulfilment. Most of the single-oracle prophets whose words are recorded in the historical books were bearers of some such short-distance prediction. Ezekiel's continual prophecy for many years that Jerusalem must fall before the might of Babylon was really a very obvious one, but the details concerning the king's attempted escape and disguise would give it additional effect.

These and other unrecorded fulfilments must not only have given the prophet himself confidence in his own message, as was shown by Jeremiah's act of faith in buying the field against the return of his people ;[3] they had also their effect in the persistence of the belief in the future Messianic age, which continued in spite of all appearances to the contrary until Messiah did come. It was possibly because the vision seen in eternity had to be translated into terms of time that the glorious consummation was expected to be so much nearer than it actually was. The time-perspective was lost, but the conviction endured.

This enduring conviction is, says St. Theresa, one of the distinctive marks of a prophetic locution. Words of grace or of instruction may be forgotten in time, "But as to prophetic words, they are never forgotten, in my opinion ; at least I have never forgotten any and yet my memory is weak."[4] Again she says that one may quite well forget what *men* say. "Neither if they prophesy of things to come, do we believe them as we do these divine locutions, which leave us so convinced

[1] Jer. 29, 10. cp. 20, 1–6 ; 30.
[2] Jer. 43, 10.
[3] Jer. 32.
[4] Life, xxv, 10.

of their truth, that although their fulfilment sometimes seems utterly impossible, and we vacillate and doubt about them, there still remains in the soul a certainty of their verity which cannot be destroyed. Perhaps everything may seem to militate against what was heard, and years pass by, yet the spirit never loses its belief that God will make use of means unknown to men for the purpose, and that finally what was foretold must surely happen ; as indeed it does."[1] "I know by experience in many ways when these locutions come from God. I have been told things two or three years beforehand, which have all come to pass ; and in none of them have I been hitherto deceived."[2]

Palladius tells two stories of this kind ; the first of Didymus, the blind scholar, might be accounted for by clairvoyance. He told Palladius : "As I was thinking one day about the life of the wretched Emperor Julian . . . it happened as I sat in my seat I was overcome by sleep and I saw in a trance white horses running with riders and proclaiming : Tell Didymus to-day at the seventh hour Julian died. Rise and eat, they said, and send to Athanasius the bishop, that he, too, may know. And I marked, he said, the hour and month and week and day, and it was found to be so." Later Palladius went to see John of Lycopolis, "who, having completed thirty years immured . . . was accounted worthy of the gift of predictions. Among other instances he sent various predictions to the blessed Emperor Theodosius, one concerning Maximus the tyrant, that he would conquer him and return from the Gauls ; similarly he also gave him good news about the tyrant Eugenius." After having told him certain home truths, the hermit went on : "Many afflictions

[1] Int. Cas., VI, iii, 11. [2] Life, xxv, 3.

are in store for you, and many times have you been tempted to leave the desert"; the devil, he said, had been worrying him about his brother and sister, and his father's health; "Behold, then, I give you good news; both are saved, for both have renounced the world. And as regards your father, at this very moment he still has other years to live."[1]

Fox tells of several predictions of his own which were fulfilled. For a man of his professedly peaceful principles he shows a great interest in the bad ends which overtook his persecutors, especially if he had foretold them. In 1653, "Being one day in Swarthmore Hall when Judge Fell and Justice Benson were talking of the news, and of the parliament then sitting, which was called the Long Parliament, I was moved to tell them that before that day two weeks the parliament should be broken up, and the Speaker plucked out of his chair. And that day two weeks, Justice Benson coming hither again, told Judge Fell that now he saw George was a true prophet, for Oliver had broken up the Parliament."[2]

In 1658 he records the well-known incident of how he met Cromwell "riding into Hampton Court Park, and before I came to him, as he rode at the head of his life-guard, I saw and felt a waft (or apparition) of death go forth against him; and when I came to him he looked like a dead man."[3] In the same year he writes: "I had a sight and sense of the king's return a good while before, and so had some others. I wrote to Oliver several times, and let him know that while he was persecuting God's people, they whom he accounted his enemies were preparing to come upon him. When some forward spirits that came among

[1] Pall. pp. 52, 120–122. [2] Fox, p. 111. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 279.

us would have bought Somerset House, that we might have meetings in it, I forbade them to do so ; for I then foresaw the king's coming in again. Besides, there came a woman to me in the Strand, who had a prophecy concerning King Charles's coming in, three years before he came ; and she told me, that she must go to him to declare it. . . . I saw her prophecy was true, and that a great stroke must come upon them in power."[1] The following year, after making a prolonged tour, " I returned to London, when General Monk was come up thither, and the gates and posts of the city were pulled down. Long before this I had a vision, wherein I saw the city lie in heaps and the gates down; and it was then represented to me, just as I saw it several years after, lying in heaps, when it was burned."[2] It was perhaps only human nature for Fox to characterise the disasters which befell the Puritans as the punishment for their treatment of the Friends, and so he writes a letter and says, " Was it not told you ? "

Among the spiritual gifts mentioned by St. Paul[3] is the " discerning of spirits." St. John also bids his converts " believe not every spirit, but try the spirits."[4] A certain amount of insight into character was expected from men who had the Spirit. We see this specially in our Lord, with His instant knowledge of the needs of those with whom He came in contact. It is brought out in His first greetings of Peter and Nathaniel,[5] and again in John 2, 24. 25, " He knew what was in man." After Pentecost Peter by the Spirit discerned the subterfuge of Ananias and Sapphira.[6]

These sudden challenges were among the powers which added to the prestige of the Old Testament

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 283.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 288.
[3] 1 Cor. 12, 10.
[4] 1 John 4, 1.
[5] John 1, 42, 47.
[6] Acts 5, 1–9.

prophet, and by their dramatic character lent themselves to preservation in stories. It was Ahijah's sudden greeting, "Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? For I am sent to thee with heavy tidings,"[1] which probably fixed the accompanying prophecy in people's minds. No less than three stories of Elisha deal with the same power, that of Gehazi and Naaman, of his services to the king as intelligence officer, and his interview with Hazael.[2] Such powers might not have the same evidential force now as they did then, but, as we said before, God uses the methods which appeal to the men with whom He is dealing, even if they do not necessarily appeal to us.

We find, however, in history that such insight has been of the greatest use to teachers of spiritual things.

John of Lycopolis, of whom we spoke in the last chapter, had the gift. Palladius was interrupted in a conversation with him by the coming of the ruler of the district, and John turned to talk to the latter. Palladius went a little way off, feeling annoyed, and was contemplating going away altogether, when John sent his interpreter, saying, "Go, tell that brother, 'Do not be petty-minded. I am just going to dismiss the ruler and talk to you.'" And when his turn came, John gave him a lecture on his attitude.[3]

Anthony too, had similar powers. Palladius tells the story of Eulogius and the cripple, and how when they had got on each other's nerves past bearing, they had gone to ask advice of Anthony. He tells how, sitting in the dark, Anthony called Eulogius out of the party by name and city, though he had been

[1] 1 Kings 14, 6. [2] 2 Kings 5, 25; 6, 8; 8, 11.
[3] Pall., p. 122.

told neither, and knew also the state of the pair and foretold their speedy, peaceful deaths.[1]

Catherine of Siena prayed for the grace of seeing the state of such souls as she might converse with in order that she might the more be moved to seek their salvation, and, says Fr. Raymund, "saw more distinctly the souls than the bodies of those who approached her." He reproved her for allowing some signs of homage. "God knows," she replied, "I do not often notice the outward gestures of those who come to see me ; I am so engaged in beholding their souls, that I pay little attention to their bodies."[2] Sin had to her an offensive odour. The story is told that when she had gone to Avignon to visit the Pope, some of the fair dames of the court were curious to see her. One day a lady appeared who seemed to Fr. Raymund a most devout person, modest in bearing and edifying in conversation, and he was considerably disturbed when Catherine turned her back on her and would have nothing to do with her, and took the Saint to task for it. "Oh, Father," she said, "if you had been conscious as I was of the stench of sin that made itself sensible whilst that woman was talking to us, I think it would verily have turned you sick." Later on, when he had made inquiries, he found that Catherine was quite right.[3]

Fox gives an almost identical account of his experience in 1647 : "The Lord shewed me that the natures of those things which were hurtful without, were within in the hearts and minds of wicked men. . . . I cried to the Lord, saying 'Why should I be thus, seeing I was never addicted to commit those evils ?' The Lord answered, That it was needful I should have

[1] *Ibid.*, 93, 95. [2] C. of S., p. 87. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 368.

a sense of all conditions, how else should I speak to all conditions ? "[1]

John Woolman found that his habit of waiting upon God brought him into truer relation to men, so that he could without offence speak very straight to them about the question of slavery which was ever on his mind. " It is good for thee to dwell deep, that thou mayest feel and understand the spirits of people," he said.[2] Another time he says he went to Meeting " in which I sat in bowedness of spirit, and being baptised into feeling of the state of some present, the Lord gave us a heart-tendering season."[3]

There are many people who have such gifts on the purely mental plane, but Woolman seems to imply something distinctive, a sort of spiritual sympathy as opposed to a merely psychic telepathy, much as we are told that there is a difference between spiritual and mental healing.

In speaking of these signs given to give authority to the prophetic message, no mention has been made of the miracles attributed to the prophets. They do not come within the scope of the present inquiry, but there is an amount of similar illustrative matter which opens the question whether it is not possible that a new relation to the Creator may in some cases involve a new relation to the creation.

[1] Fox, p. 17. [2] Woolman, p. 149. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

CHAPTER VIII

THE THIRD DEGREE OF VISION

IT will be remembered that Julian of Norwich spoke of a third manner of vision, a "spiritual sight" which she found indescribable. St. Theresa gives many particulars of ecstasy, rapture, and intellectual vision, which all share this characteristic, that they go beyond the simpler "word formed in mine understanding," and do not seem necessarily to convey any message for transmisssion. It is therefore difficult to assert that there are signs of them in the prophetic accounts which are less concerned with the personal experience of the prophet than with the present and future condition of his people, and with his own authorisation to act as God's ambassador to them. But a brief examination of some of St. Theresa's data may throw a little light on the subject of our inquiry.

"I was in prayer one day," she says, "when I saw Christ close by me, or, to speak more correctly, felt Him; for I saw nothing with the eyes of the body, nothing with the eyes of the soul. . . ." It is not, she says, as if a blind person or one in the dark was aware of someone else in the room. "The darkness is not felt; only He renders Himself present to the soul by a certain knowledge of Himself which is more clear than the sun." This is an intellectual vision, and differs from the "imaginary" vision or interior audition

before described, because in the latter "the soul seems to have other ears wherewith it hears; and He forces it to listen, and will not let it be distracted," but in the intellectual vision "even that little which is nothing more than the bare act of listening, which is granted to it in the other case, is now out of its power. It finds its food prepared and eaten; it has nothing more to do but to enjoy it. It is as if one without ever learning, without ever taking the pains even to learn to read, and without studying any subject whatever, should find himself in possession of all knowledge, not knowing how or whence it came to him. . . .[1] These two kinds of visions come almost always together, and they do so come; for we behold the excellency and beauty and glory of the most Holy Humanity with the eyes of the soul. And in the other way I have spoken of—that of intellectual vision—we learn how He is God, is mighty, can do all things, commands all things, governs all things, and fills all things with His love."[2]

In another place she gives a slightly different description. "God speaks to the soul in another way, by a certain intellectual vision. . . . It takes place far within the innermost depths of the soul, which appears to hear distinctly, in a most mysterious manner, with its spiritual hearing, the words spoken to it by our Lord Himself."[3] Speaking of ecstasy, she says, "While the soul is in this suspension, our Lord favours it by discovering to it secrets, such as heavenly mysteries and imaginary visions which admit of description afterwards, because they remain so imprinted on the memory that it never forgets them. But when the visions are intellectual they are not thus

[1] ? Cp. Acts 4, 13. [2] Life, xxvii, 3, 10; xxviii, 14.
[3] Int. Cas., VI, iii, 19.

easily related, some of those received at such a time being so sublime that it is not fitting for man while living in this world to understand them in a way that can be told."[1] Some of this tallies closely with St. Paul's account of his rapture,[2] especially when later she goes on to describe what she calls "the flight of the spirit." "With the swiftness of a bullet fired from a gun, an upward flight takes place in the interior of the soul. . . . Although noiseless, it is too manifest a movement to be any illusion, and the soul is quite outside itself; at least, that is the impression made upon it." "She cannot tell . . . whether her spirit remains within her body or not. She feels that she has been wholly transported into another and very different region from that in which we live, where a light so unearthly is shown that if during her whole lifetime she had been trying to picture it, and the wonders seen, she could not possibly have succeeded. In an instant her mind learns so many things at once that if the imagination and intellect spent years in striving to enumerate them it could not recall a thousandth part of them,"[3] but "neither the bodily eyes, however, nor the eyes of the soul see anything, for these visions and many other things impossible to describe are revealed by some wonderful intuition that I am unable to explain."[4]

Further details are given by both Fox and the Sadhu. Sundar Singh says, "There are pearls in the sea, but to get them you have to dive to the bottom. Ecstasy is a dive to the bottom of spiritual things."[5] Elsewhere we are told "the words are words, but they are neither heard nor spoken, the sights are seen and yet

[1] Int. Cas., VI, iv, 5.
[2] 2 Cor. 12, 1–4.
[3] Int. Cas., VI, v, 10, 8.
[4] *Ibid.*, VI, v, 9.
[5] Sadhu, p. 132.

not as if with eyes." "There is no language which will express the things which I see and hear in the spiritual world; I am like a dumb man who can taste and enjoy the sweets that are given to him, but cannot express or explain it to others."[1]

Fox tells how "one Brown" prophesied about him when on his death-bed. "When this man was buried, a great work of God fell upon me, to the admiration of many who thought I had been dead. . . . I saw into that which was without end, things which cannot be uttered, and of the greatness and infinitude of the love of God which cannot be expressed by words. . . . I saw the harvest white, and the seed of God lying thick on the ground, as ever did wheat that was sown outwardly, and none to gather it."[2] And in the following year, after he had been at Mansfield, "Now was I come up in Spirit, through the flaming sword, into the paradise of God. All things were new; and all creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter. . . . Great things did the Lord lead me into and wonderful depths were opened unto me, beyond what can by words be declared; but as people come into subjection to the Spirit of God, and grow up in the image and power of the Almighty, they may receive the Word of Wisdom, that opens all things, and come to know the hidden unity in the Eternal Being."[3]

From these quotations emerge certain facts. Those who saw the kind of visions described can give very little account of them, because they transcend our language, indeed they do not always remain in the memory, but they exercise a profoundly modifying effect upon the outlook and sense of values of the seer.

[1] Sadhu, p. 140. [2] Fox, pp. 18–19. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

As St. Theresa says,[1] the vision entirely changes the view of this life. Nothing is to be prized in comparison with the riches of heaven and the knowledge of God; and we see this same transmutation of values in the prophets. Had they, too, undergone some such experience which gave that ground and background to all their teaching; not so much a direct message, as a general disposition of mind out of which comes their considered attitude to life, and which colours all their teaching? A good deal of teaching which is not given as a definite message seems to be based upon some such intuition of truth. Many teachers before them have given virtuous maxims, but they have not been enforced as belonging to the very stuff of the world by men who have seen into the eternal verities, into the truth of life personal and national, and of God's purpose for it. And from this vision of the law of God's working comes the realisation of the conditional nature of prophecy. God has not made this world a rigid bed of Procrustes into which men have to fit according to their destiny whatever they do. God in making man in His own image has made him to some extent a causal agent, and, seeing this, the prophets first discovered the individual and first wrote history.[2]

In the prophetic history of the kingdoms we have two outstanding figures who produced cause, "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin," and to whom in consequence the downfall of Israel is traced, and David, for whose sake the Judean dynasty was preserved. This problem, then, confronts the seer. God's good purpose must stand, yet even David has not sufficed to save a people bent on going astray. So when the destruction of the nation is inevitable the

[1] Int. Cas., VI, iv, 14. [2] Jer. 18, 1–12.

search begins for that "man" who shall suffice for its restoration. Jeremiah[1] can see none, nor can Ezekiel[2] find one who will, as Moses or Phinehas, "stand in the gap" to deliver his people.[3] Deutero-Isaiah feels after him throughout the "servant" passages, until[4] he sees the vision of the man who shall be adequate to the task. There is throughout the prophetic books a feeling for law, of cause and effect. "Because . . . therefore," is repeated again and again. But whatever men may do, the vision of the prophet has taught him two things. God's purpose for man is good, and He is able to bring it to pass.

There are two signs which may bear on this question of the "intellectual" vision in the case of the prophets.

It will be remembered that our examples spoke of the difficulty of describing the manner by which that which was neither really seen nor heard was apprehended. In *Mysticism* Evelyn Underhill speaks of the difference in the number of vibrations which determines whether we perceive a thing by sight or hearing, and suggests that, apart from our physical bodies and their apparatus, we may have some means of perceiving which is neither hearing nor seeing. In this connection the new instrument by which the blind can *hear* the letters of a book by means of an optophone is of interest. In some, at all events, of the experiences of the prophet the distinction between sight and hearing seems to have been blurred, and he says "The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw."[5] Habakkuk so mingles the two that it seems indifferent to him which word he uses. "I will . . . look forth to see what He will speak with me. . . . And the LORD answered

[1] Jer. 5, 1.
[2] Ezek. 22, 30–31.
[3] Ps. 106, 23. 30.
[4] Isa. 53.
[5] Isa. 2, 1; cp. Micah 1, 1; Amos 1, 1.

me and said, 'Write the vision.'"[1] "This is the word that the LORD hath shewed me."[2] It seems to imply that in some cases there was a mode of apprehension which could not be strictly called either.

A little light is thrown on the point by an expression in Dorothy Kerin's book.[3] Speaking of a vision of angels she says: "Their movements made lovely music." Further light is given in the following account by Frances Ridley Havergal of how she once *saw* music.

She writes on Sept. 29, 1874: "In the train I had one of those curious musical visions which only very rarely visit me. I hear strange and very beautiful chords, generally full, slow and grand, succeeding each other in most interesting sequences. I do not invent them. I could not, they pass through my mind and I only listen. . . . It is so interesting, the chords seem to *fold into each other* and die away down into music of most exquisite softness and then they unfold and open out as if great curtains were being withdrawn one behind another. . . . This time there was an added feature; I seemed to hear depths and heights of sound beyond the scale which human ears can receive, keen, far-up octaves, like vividly tinkling *starlight* of music, and mighty, slow vibrations of gigantic strings going down into the grand thunders of depths, octaves below anything otherwise appreciable as musical notes. Then, all at once, it seemed as if my soul had got a new sense, and I could *see* this inner music as well as hear it; and then it was like gazing down into marvellous *abysses of sound* and up into dazzling regions of what to the eye, would have been light and colour, but to this new sense was *sound*. Wasn't it odd? It lasted

[1] Hab. 2, 1–2.
[2] Jer. 38, 21.
[3] Kerin, p. 8.

about half an hour."[1] If it had not been for such experiences there would perhaps have been little to notice in the expressions quoted above from the prophets, but with such illustrations they give a hint of a possible new mode of apprehension.

There is another point which may be illustrated in this connection. It has been said that we lose much of the prophet's vision through the necessity which lay upon him to focus it down into words. The bigger the vision the more it has to be *reduced* to get it into our language. On the other hand, when God uses a word to the prophet, it seems to open a door into a far larger connotation, and the vision of what may be a very simple thing seems to carry with it far more than its face value. This is the case, for example, in Jeremiah 1, 11–13, Amos 8, 2–3, and Habakkuk 2, 1–3. In each case a little apparently conveys a great deal. St. Theresa again says, speaking of intellectual visions, "In a manner which I cannot explain these communications, without any further explanations, frequently give us to understand far more than is implied by the words themselves," and again, of an imaginary vision, "Although no words are pronounced the spirit is taught many truths."[2]

Julian of Norwich gives two incidents in which the same feature is brought out. First, "And in this He shewed me a little thing, the quantity of a hazel-nut lying in the palm of my hand; and to my understanding it was as round as any ball. I looked thereupon and thought, 'What may this be?' And I was answered generally thus: 'It is all that is made.' I marvelled how it might last, for methought it might fall suddenly to nought for littleness. And I was

[1] Memorials, p. 152. [2] Int. Cas., VI, iii, 2; VI, v, 9.

answered in mine understanding : ' It lasts, and ever shall, for God loves it.' And so all-thing hath its being through the love of God. And in this little thing I saw three parts." She then goes on for three pages expounding the further teaching arising out of her perception of the vision.[1]

In the next chapter she says again : " And in that time that our Lord shewed this that I have now said in *ghostly* sight, I saw the *bodily* sight lasting of the plenteous bleeding of the head [of the crucifix]. And as long as I saw that sight I said oftentimes, *Benedicite Domine*. In this first shewing of our Lord I saw six things in mine understanding." She enumerates them, and they are big things, but so far all the vision recorded is that of the bleeding of the crucifix and the sight of the cosmos. " And the bodily sight ceased ; and the ghostly sight dwelt in mine understanding." This is the story as it is set out in the first draft of the *Revelations*, hardly more than a pamphlet. But by the meditations of years, more and more was opened from the original visions (for apparently she had no more) till the final edition is a considerable sized book of deep thought.

Prof. Pratt speaks of this slow formulation of truth perceived. ". . . This feeling is invariably crystallised about some central idea, some intellectual certainty, which comes to the mystic as a revelation of truth, and which he usually has no difficuly in defining and communicating. It does not come to him, to be sure, in the form of a clearly expressed judgment, but rather as an immediate intuition of a reality, which only later on he is able to formulate into a perfectly definite proposition."[2]

[1] Comfortable Words, chap. 4. [2] Rel. Con., p. 349.

We cannot on such very faint indications claim to prove that intellectual visions formed a part of the prophetic experience. But what we know of that experience is necessarily like that part of an iceberg which appears above water. It indicates a much deeper life than is visible. A life of very deep communion with God was essential for men who had to go against the whole current of contemporary thought, and who attained to a vision of the purposefulness of the life of the race, not only of their own nation, which no one else had at the time when they taught.

It seems, then, not wholly impossible that some of their declarations may arise rather from this background of experience than from an immediate commission or message.

CHAPTER IX

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SOME INCIDENTS

THERE is one occurrence which is frequent in prophetic experience. The prophet is told to go somewhere and to do something, or sometimes just told to go, and wait till he arrives for his instructions. Sometimes the thing he is told to do appears almost unreasonable until time makes clear why it was commanded.

Some of the things the prophet was bidden to do, while they put a severe test on his obedience, were yet clearly comprehensible as a means of bringing some fact forcibly and continuously before the eyes of people who might pay little attention to the spoken word only. Such, for instance, was Isaiah's two years "naked and bare-foot,"[1] or Jeremiah's yoke,[2] or, again, Ezekiel's acted siege of Jerusalem, and of the king's flight.[3]

The prophet of the Old, as the apostle of the New Testament, was the "slave" of the Lord, and as such prompt and unquestioning obedience was required of him. He might be bidden to go to some place for a purpose which was not revealed till he arrived, and he had to face the possibility of making a public fool of himself by acting on what he believed to be his Master's commands. Was some such fear at the bottom of John Baptist's question, "Art thou He that

[1] Isa. 20.
[2] Jer. 27; cp. Acts 21, 10.
[3] Ezek. 4, 1–5, 17; 12, 1–13.

should come ? "[1] Samuel is told to go down to Bethlehem and anoint one of Jesse's sons, but he is not told which, and has to pass the whole family in review before arriving at the right man. Elijah, after denouncing famine upon Israel, is sent to two unlikely places for shelter, and then with apparently no instructions sent back to Ahab.[2] Amos says, "The LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said unto me, 'Go, prophesy unto My people Israel.' "[3] Jeremiah goes down to the potter's to hear the word.[4] Cornelius and Peter are both bidden to act on trust, one to send for a wholly unknown man, to hear from him an unknown message ; the other to go and visit a Gentile—a course of action opposed to his whole upbringing, and which would certainly be condemned by the rigorist party at Jerusalem.[5]

In Mrs. Trotter's *Life of Lord Radstock,* two such stories follow closely on each other. "When living at Southsea he was awakened at three in the morning by a strong impulse to dress and go out. He at first tried to resist it, but so persistent was it that in the cold winter morning he rose and went out to the common, where he found a solitary man. That man in anguish of soul had come out in his despair. God's servant met him, and then and there light dawned and the burden rolled away."[6] And again : he was one day apparently going to be late for a meeting and was reminded of it. "His reply was that the Lord would not let him go yet, and when asked whether that meant that he had been mistaken in appointing the meeting, he said no, it was all right, but he could not go yet. He said he did not know why the Lord kept him waiting. Shortly after,

[1] Matt. 11, 3.
[2] 1 Kings 17, 2. 8 ; 18, 1.
[3] Amos 7, 15.
[4] Jer. 18, 1.
[5] Acts 10, 5. 20.
[6] P. 120.

a telegram quite unexpectedly was handed to him." It turned out to be important, and he was still able to get to the meeting in time to do his part.[1]

Another instance is to be found in the *Life of Hudson Taylor;* in fact, the whole book is full of illustrations of the subject, but two must suffice. He was ill, and was ordered nourishing food, but soon was at the end of his money. Some months before he had advanced money to a poor woman on account of her sailor husband's pay. Then, going to draw the pay at the office, he was told the man had deserted his ship, and the money was forfeited. On this occasion he was just able with great difficulty to get downstairs, when he felt "as if He were directing my mind to the conclusion to go again to the shipping office and inquire again about the wages I had been unable to draw." He thought it might be "some mental process of my own rather than His guidance and teaching," especially as he had no means of getting to the office, and had barely been able with help to get downstairs. "The assurance was brought vividly home to me that whatever I asked of God in the Name of Christ would be done . . . that what I had to do was to seek strength for the long walk, to receive it by faith, and set out upon it." Which accordingly he did, though, as he said, "I never took so much interest in shop windows as I did on that journey," and in due course got from Soho to Cheapside. Arrived at the office, he found that there had been a mistake—the deserter had been another man of the same name. He therefore received the money due to him, which was sufficient to pay his doctor and take him home to Yorkshire and also pay for an omnibus back to Soho.[2]

[1] P. 129. [2] H. T., pp. 167–9.

The other instance is the end of the story of Wang the farmer, who was cited as an example of exterior audition. He went to Ning-po, as he had been instructed by the voice, and for some time supported himself by selling grass to the townsfolk, but found no one who could help him on religious matters. At last one day he heard a working-man talking in a tea-shop about the "Jesus-doctrine," and the forgiveness of sins, and introduced himself to inquire further. He found the man came from his own neighbourhood, and was one of Hudson Taylor's converts. His master had dismissed him because he refused to work on Sunday, and had gone round to all the members of his Guild, asking them to promise not to engage the man when he came round on Monday, seeking work. They did as they were asked, and as he could get no work the Christian used his enforced holiday in preaching. So doing, he met Wang, and was the means of his conversion. He got a job next day, for he was a clever workman, and while the new master had promised not to engage him on Monday, he had said nothing about Tuesday ![1]

Miss Amy Wilson Carmichael, whose name is known in connection with her home at Dohnavur for the rescue of Temple children in India, has written a little book called *Nor Scrip*, telling of the way in which the work has been supported entirely by prayer and without appeals. One story out of many tells how she had lost a case at law, and the judge decreed that she was to pay heavy costs. "Three weeks before the bill was sent in, a man in London, manager of a well-known business house, was wakened and caused to understand that he was to send a cheque to us next day. He was

[1] H. T., p. 474.

also caused to pray for us very earnestly, and having committed us, with full assurance that help and comfort had reached us, he slept again." Next day he sent off the cheque which "was the exact sum to the rupee to pay the bill of costs."[1]

At other times the prophet was bidden to do something which seemed more than rash, as when Jeremiah was commanded to buy the field of Hanameel.[2] Miss Carmichael says that never did she understand that story till the day she finished paying for a field the complicated buying of which had lasted from 1904 to 1914—the last date at which it would have been possible to secure it. One day, long before she had had any idea that so much land would be wanted, as she was looking from the verandah out on "a view of a fair field beyond, reaching, in fact, up to a village on the north, the word came as clearly as ever I had known it, 'Ask for that piece of land.'

"'But, Lord, we do not want it,' and again the word came, 'Ask.' I had never asked for an unwanted thing, and was puzzled. . . . But there was no escape from that strange urging as of another will than mine; so I asked for the field, adding though, I remember, 'But have we not enough?'" The field had many owners, and about thirty transactions were needed before all the many persons who had a voice in its disposal were satisfied, and throughout the ten years new gardens were continually being taken up and walls sunk all round it; but no one bought a part of the plot that was asked for, and it was all paid for by special gifts.[3]

Then there is the story of the disobedient prophet,[4] who was sent on an errand and bidden not to eat or

[1] Nor Scrip, chap. 6.
[2] Jer. 32.
[3] Chap. 15.
[4] 1 Kings 13.

drink till he returned from it. Both Palladius and Fox give illustrations of this. Palladius was told by Moses the Libyan how, when he was a young man, he with other monks at his monastery dug a well, but after three days' hard work, when they had got below the usual level at which water was found, and found none, they thought of giving up. "Then Pior appeared from the desert . . . and said, after the greeting, 'Why have you lost heart, men of little faith? For I have seen you since yesterday losing heart.' And having descended by a ladder to the cavity of the well, he said a prayer with them, and having taken a pick he said, after striking the third blow: 'Oh, God of the holy patriarchs, make not the toil of thy servants useless, but send them the water they need.' And immediately water sprang out so that they were wetted all over. So he prayed once more and went off. They tried to make him eat, but he would not suffer them, saying: 'That for which I was sent is accomplished; for this I was not sent.'"[1]

Sometimes the prophet was simply bidden to go somewhere, or told how to go, as Jeremiah was sent to the Euphrates.[2] The story of Marmaduke Stevenson quoted above gives instances of this. "So at the time appointed," he says, "Barbadoes was set before me, unto which I was required of the Lord to go and leave my dear and loving wife and tender children. . . . So in obedience to the living God I made preparation to pass to Barbadoes in the fourth month, 1658." After he had been there some months he heard that in New England a law had been passed to execute Quakers if they returned after being exiled. "And as I considered the thing . . . immediately came the word of

[1] Pall., p. 138. [2] Jer. 13, 1–7.

the Lord to me, saying, 'Thou knowest not but that thou mayest go thither.'" Then apparently he was led to go to Rhode Island. "So after I had been there visiting the seed which the Lord had blessed, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Go to Boston with thy brother William Robinson,' and at His command I was obedient." The account was written a week before his execution at Boston.[1]

A story of Stephen Grellet is told by Miss Hodgkin in her *Book of Quaker Saints*, which illustrates the story of Philip's journey to Gaza and his sermon to the eunuch. Grellet heard the command to leave his work and take a certain journey. When he reached the end of it he found only a deserted lumber camp. Nevertheless he was bidden to go into the main shanty and preach, which he did, until, having delivered his soul of the burden laid upon him, he felt himself at liberty to go back on his several days' journey home again. It was not till many years later that he learnt that a man had been hidden behind the hut, was converted by his sermon, and became the means of converting a whole village.

Perhaps the most remarkable account of travelling directions is that given in Acts,[2] by which Paul was guided to cross into Europe. But it is illustrated by the extraordinary story of the voyage of the *Woodhouse* (in 1657), carrying a party of Quakers to New England.

The *Woodhouse* was a small ship, and for part of the way was convoyed by three big ships, who left them for fear of the Dutch. "It was showed to Humphrey Norton early in the morning that they were nigh unto us that sought our lives; and he called me and told me, but said: 'Thus saith the Lord; ye shall be

[1] C. L. F. T., p. 33. [2] Acts 16, 6–10.

carried away as in a mist.' " They saw the Dutchman, and their companions fled. " In the very interim the Lord God fulfilled His promise and struck our enemies in the face with a contrary wind, wonderfully to our refreshment. Then upon our parting from these three ships, we were brought to ask counsel of the Lord and the word was from Him, ' Cut through and steer your straightest course, and mind nothing but Me,' unto which thing He much provoked us and caused us to meet together every day. . . . Thus it was all the voyage with the faithful, who were carried far above storms and tempests, that when the ship went either to the right hand or to the left, their hands joined all as one and did direct her way ; so that we have seen and said, we see the Lord leading our vessel even as it were a man leading a horse by the head, we regarding neither latitude nor longitude, but kept to our Line, which was and is our Leader, Guide and Rule." When in July, 1657, they made land, after special "drawings," they found themselves exactly at that part of Long Island " where the movings of some Friends were unto."[1]

Stephen Grellet gives the story of another guidance operating in a different manner. He was in Europe in 1813, on one of his missionary tours. In Genoa he intended to go to Rome by sea *via* Leghorn. " As I was going to engage my passage for that port, my mind was introduced into unutterable distress—gross darkness seemed to be before me, whilst a bright stream of light was behind ; I stood still for a while and found I could not go forward." He went home and prayed to God for guidance. " He gave me to see and very strongly to feel that to Rome and Naples I should

[1] C. L. F. T., p. 29–30.

indeed go, but that the time for it had not yet come, and the language of the Spirit was to proceed with all speed to Geneva and Switzerland." This he accordingly did, and found later that the French had sent out orders for his arrest, and if he had escaped he ran the risk of being shut up into Italy by the retreating army of the King of Naples, or involved in the flying armies of Napoleon pursued by the Austrians.[1]

After these more detailed accounts, Woolman's description of the guidance which he experienced on his journey to England is very slight. He knew of a ship that was shortly sailing, "and feeling a draught in my mind towards the steerage of the same ship," he went to make inquiries.[2]

Quite a different experience is indicated by the expression, "The pattern shewed thee in the mount."[3] Was a pattern really shown? From Miss Carmichael's account it is not impossible. She found that it was necessary to build a schoolhouse for the growing children. "We had not thought of anything large, but as we pondered the matter, 'as it were the appearance' of something large was shown. Our way where buildings are concerned is to ask for a pattern. . . . Now, the perplexing thing in this case was that the pattern that seemed to be shown was much too large for our requirements. We had enough money, a special gift, for a building framed on a smaller pattern. . . . But it was drawn and considered, and on January 17, 1910, the estimate was made. It far passed the limits of that gift." But on the 20th so much money came in that they decided to begin the work, and next month

[1] Grellet, pp. 91–92. [2] W., p. 215.
[3] Exod. 25, 40; 27, 8; Num. 8, 4; cp. Ezek. 40–48 and Rev. 11, 1, 2; 21, 12–20.

a letter dated January 17 brought £100, and gifts came in steadily till the work was paid for.[1]

Our last examples concern the power of God to hold back those who would hurt His servants when they are on His errands until their work is accomplished.

It has often been noted in connection with Daniel in the den of lions that a fakir in a trance will go safely into the jungle because wild beasts will not touch a man in that state. But there is another kind of holding back. We have so far not been taking our Lord's experiences into account. He is unique. But two or three times it is recorded of Him that His enemies were unable to do anything against Him "because His hour had not yet come,"[2] and in Luke,[3] when the people of Nazareth tried to kill Him, "He, passing through the midst of them, went His way."

There are several incidents which illustrate this binding power of God's providence. It is told that during one of the periodical faction fights to which Siena was subject Catherine of Siena's brothers were on the losing side, and a friend of theirs came to the house begging them to take refuge in the church of St. Anthony, where others had gone for safety. Catherine said: "They shall certainly not go to St. Anthony's! and I am heartily sorry for those who are already there." Then she rose up and led them straight down the street which was occupied by their enemies, who bowed reverently to her, and took them to a place of safety where she told them to lie hidden for three days. After three days the city was quiet, but all who had gone to St. Anthony's were killed.[4]

Mr. Glover tells how on their flight from the Boxers

[1] Nor Scrip, 22–25.
[2] John 7, 44; 10, 39.
[3] Luke 4, 30.
[4] C. of S., pp. 97, 98.

they were pursued to the edge of a ridge which "fell away on one side in a steep declivity to a dry torrent bed." They were jostled and pushed as the people tried to force them along the ridge to a little temple, intending to stone them. At a word from their faithful Chinese servant they turned and followed a thin goat trail down the steep declivity. "The moment we disappeared over the side, the mob simultaneously stopped dead at the spot, as if arrested by a sudden and irresistible power. The loud yells and cries of a moment ago were stilled to silence—absolute, awful silence. So startling was it that I dared to turn and take one look. I could scarcely believe my eyes. The mob lined the ridge in hundreds, motionless as if spell-bound, helplessly watching us . . . slip away from under their very hand. Not a single soul of them attempted to follow."[1]

Later on they were arrested and taken a terrible journey to the yamen of a mandarin by soldiers who, while not daring to kill them themselves, were anxious to get rid of them without involving the yamen in possible trouble. They came to a large market-town which they were told was very anti-foreign, and while they rested at the inn the soldiers left them for a time, as they afterwards found, to stir up the populace to a massacre. They meanwhile gave themselves to prayer. "Meantime a crowd was gathering at the courtyard gates, which had been closed behind us, and the yelling and battering that now ensued told its own tale. The terrible cry, 'Kill the devils!' was its own confirmation of the escort's warning. When at length they called us to 'shang ch'ae,' it was significantly to repeat the warning that there was no chance of our getting

[1] 1000 Miles, p. 146.

out of the town alive ; and in the prospect of immediate death we passed out on to the street. . . . What was it that paralysed the arm and tied the tongue of the vast crowd that lined the way ? We saw it with our eyes—the people, who but now were at the doors yelling for us to be brought out to them, as though turned to stone at the sight of us. Hundreds of them (I might almost say thousands) massed on either side, watching us pass slowly along the narrow lane they left for us, without speaking a word or lifting a finger against us. A few lads echoed the shout that had so lately rent the air, but there was no response of any sort or kind."[1]

Fox's Journal is full of instances. The following is perhaps one of the most striking. In 1671, as he was sailing to America, their ship was chased by what they thought was a Sallee rover. The master, saying that "If the mariners had taken Paul's counsel they had not come to the damage they did," consulted him, and "The Lord showed me that His life and power was placed between us and the ship that pursued us." The Sallee rover was the faster ship of the two, and though the Englishmen put out all their lights, "About eleven at night the watch called and said they were just upon us. That disquieted some of the passengers, whereupon I sat up in my cabin and, looking through the porthole, the moon not being quite gone down, I saw them very near to us. I was getting up to go out of the cabin, but remembering the word of the Lord, that His life and power was placed between us and them, I lay down again. The master and some of the seamen came again and asked me if they might not steer such a point ? I told them they might do as

[1] 1000 Miles, p. 230.

they would. By this time the moon was quite down, a fresh gale arose, and the Lord hid us from them ; and we sailed briskly on and we saw them no more. . . . Afterwards, while we were at Barbadoes, there came in a merchant from Sallee and told the people that one of the Sallee men-of-war saw a monstrous yacht at sea, the greatest that ever he saw, and had her in chase, and was just upon her, but that there was a spirit in her that he could not take." [1]

Examples might be multiplied, but enough have been brought forward to show that whatever conclusion psychology may draw as to their nature, the phenomena have been continuous from the prophets to the present day, and that in people who, like the prophets, have been leaders in new social and religious developments which have stood the test of time.

The question of the inspiration of the prophets is then not an isolated problem, but is bound up with the experience of the servants of God for the last two thousand years.

[1] Fox, pp. 423–5.

CHAPTER X

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

IN these days, when psychology has made such strides, it is harder than it would have been some ten years ago for one without first-hand knowledge of either psychology or mysticism to draw definite conclusions from these data. We can only offer some considerations which appear to rise out of them.

There are, as St. Theresa says, certain words which "are deeds." They have in an unparalleled way "found" people for the last two thousand and more years. Originally written in Palestine, yet the present age only shows in an increasing measure the universality of their appeal, as they come with a force which none of our modern productions can command, alike to the ignorant savage or the cultured philosopher. They change lives. They have been through the ages recognised by those who knew God as spoken by the same voice that spoke to them.

We are now engaged in the quest for social amelioration and reform. In these words are found by growing consent the soundest principles of national, political, and social life. Centuries ago prophets and wise men taught that the root of both social and economic righteousness lay first in the spiritual attitude of man to God and to his neighbour; "as a man thinketh, so is he." Their teaching as to what destroys

a nation has been exemplified throughout history, and not least in our own time. These men were not only ahead of their own age, they are still ahead of ours. They laid the foundation of the building Christ came to complete. It fitted. He had not to destroy but to fulfil. Looking back, we can see that they were working to a plan ; but they were looking forward.

Whence had these men these things ?

We have seen that their experiences, though larger in scope, appear to be of the same nature as those of others throughout the Christian era, which are also ascribed to the direct communication of God the Creator with man made in His image. Are these claims valid, or are they to be accounted for in terms of sublimation of instincts, emotions, complexes, and suggestions ?

Any mental processes must of course come within the scope of psychology, but can these be reduced to *merely* mental processes without vitiating the evidence, even as did materialism by trying to reduce mental processes to terms of the material in which they worked ? As the mind uses the body for its purposes, so the spirit uses the mind, but neither is to be limited to, or identified with, the instrument it uses, nor to be explained in terms of the instrument alone.

If mankind were in a *cul-de-sac* with no further development to look forward to, such an explanation might be necessary. But if man is on a thoroughfare, if " the true Divine order is ever ready to break through into the world, if men will only suffer it to break into their hearts," if man's true development depends on his response to a Divine environment, more is necessary to account for experiences which, as we have seen, are so widespread. If evolution is a progress from one

state of being, it is also a progress towards another, and if man retains vestiges of his past is he to be denied embryonic indications of his future, powers not yet fully developed of spiritual hearing and sight by means of which in trusted hands the race is to be guided in the direction of the goal to which it is bound ?

If that is so, we may think of man as living in a tent with two doors. If we credit one party, he can only open his back door and look back on the way by which he has come, to the rock from whence he was hewn, and the hole of the pit from which he was digged. On the other view, he can also open his front door, and look forward to the home to which he goes, and hear the words of those who dwell there. For most of us the door is very stiff. The saints and prophets are those who have succeeded in opening it a little wider than the rest of us.

One more consideration. If we can accept the evidence of the prophets and saints, who, whatever their gifts, were still sinful and imperfect men and women, that they *did*, in spite of all, know and hold communion with God and with Christ, and hear the commands of the Holy Spirit—what light does it throw upon the human consciousness of Christ ? Would it not appear that whatever degree of *kenosis* we accept, yet for Him, as the Perfect, Sinless Man, Man as he is meant to be when full grown, there would be none of the barriers to perfect communion with the Father which are imposed by our sinfulness and imperfect development ? Would there be any limit to the revelations which the Perfect Man could as MAN receive from His Father except the unknown limits of the capacity of the perfect human nature to register them ?

NOTE ON THE QUARTER SHEKEL OF SAUL'S SERVANT

1 Samuel 9

MANY conclusions as to the status of Samuel have been drawn from the suggestion of Saul's servant that the quarter shekel he had in his pocket would be an adequate gift in connection with the inquiry about the lost asses. For example, Professor T. R. Robinson, in his *Prophecy and the Prophets*, which was unfortunately not published in time to be used more extensively in this essay, says: "A fee is usually required . . . this implies that the Seer is master of his own powers and can work to order" (p. 29).

The following note from a book written by one who some seventy years ago lived for a considerable time in the Holy Land is illuminating:

"Then as now, in the East, it would have been the height of rudeness and indecorum for anyone to present himself before a superior or equal, especially if he had a request to make, without some present, more or less, according to his degree,—not by any means as a fee or bribe, but in testimony of his homage, his respect, or his compliments." Plutarch records of the Persian King Artaxerxes Mnemon that he "always received with satisfaction the smallest and most trifling gifts which evinced the zeal and attention of the offerers; and in a country where we have ourselves bought six of the finest pomegranates for a penny, he evinced the utmost pleasure on receiving from a man named Romises the finest pomegranate his garden yielded. A present equally small would have enabled Saul to pay his respects to

Samuel ; but it was as impossible for him to appear empty-handed, as it would be for us to enter a gentleman's parlour with covered heads. He lamented that . . . there was not a morsel left of the bread they had taken with them, clearly intimating that one of the small cakes or loaves into which Eastern bread is made, would in his view have been a suitable offering. The servant informed him, however, that he had sixpence in his pocket, which could be applied to this purpose. . . . With us, to offer a small sum of money to a superior or a public man, or even to an equal, would be a gross affront. . . . All this is different in the East, where a small coin is not less acceptable as a mark of respectful attention, than its value in any other shape."

Dr. Kitto. *Daily Bible Illustrations*, 30th week, 5th day. (Oliphant, 1853.)

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